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DETECTIVE STORY

A MAN *from* SIAM

by

Charles Fulton Oursler

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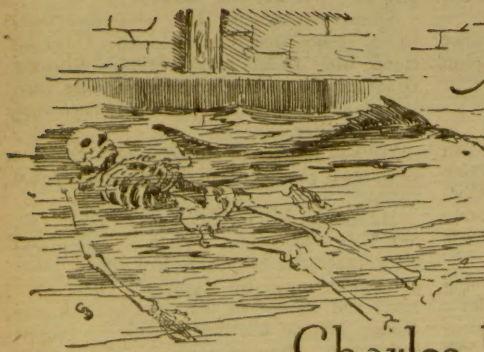
Just Between Ourselves

SOME time ago we asked our readers for an expression of their opinion of this magazine, as constructive criticism is very helpful. It tells an editor just what his readers want, and enables him to please them by furnishing what they ask for. Complying with several requests, we have secured a number of interesting stories of detective adventure with surprise endings, some stories of the underworld that rivet one's interest like a vise, and a quantity of manuscript dealing with occult subjects. They will be published in each succeeding issue, and will, we are sure, please you very much. The feature story in our next number is written by Beulah Poynter, one of the cleverest playwrights in the world. She has written a number of celebrated dramas, and has incorporated all her best talent in the novelette, "The Clue of the Emerald Ring," which will appear in the April 1st edition. The short stories will be a rare treat from a galaxy of famous magazine writers. "A Journey of Duplicity" is a brilliant detective story, by S. F. Mansergh, who is a past-master at this type of composition. We will have a good one from Peter Perry entitled "Found on the Fifth Floor," and a story called "Hidden Hate," by Edgar Daniel Kramer. Then there will be a powerful story entitled "Alibi Absolute." Hamilton Cragie and Walter Grahme are the authors, and you know what splendid stories they write. There will be several more striking yarns and one more of Russell Raymond Voorhees's series of psychological articles on the subject of Physiognomy, or the science of reading character by the face. Some of the miscellaneous articles about queer things and odd happenings are going to surprise you, and there will be quite a large number of them. Watch out for the next issue of "Mystery," and you will be more than pleased. In our last number we did not tell you about more than one-half of the stories you will find in this number, and we hope you are pleased with the little surprise we had in store for you. That's what we want to do — please our readers, because we want your friendship and co-operation.

THE EDITOR.



A MAN from SIAM

by

Charles Fulton Oursler

CHAPTER ONE

BLACK MAGIC!

CARVEL DOWNING backed into the living-room of the Stardale apartment, his face marked with anxiety.

"Don't you dare to interrupt me again!" came a high-pitched voice within the study from which Downing had just emerged. "Don't annoy me again with your pestiferous advice! I can take care of my own affairs, young man. I won't stand your impudence."

In the very face of the clean-cut young man with the raven hair and thoughtful eyes, the study door was banged shut insultingly. Downing stood looking at it blankly, as if unable to comprehend what had happened.

"What is wrong, Carvel?" asked a sweet and girlish voice.

He turned, to see Grace Stardale in the doorway at the other end of the room. Between the parted curtains she stood, an adorable picture of rosy and delicious maidenhood—with pink-and-white cheeks and starry eyes and a wealth of brown hair.

"What on earth has happened?" she persisted when he did not respond.

"Your father told me to mind my own business," said the District Attorney's detective.

"And why don't you?" she asked pertly, smiling to appease him. "I don't blame father. I think you are making entirely too much of all this business!"

"I am not. It is more serious than you seem to be able to comprehend. By heaven, I am going to make both you and him see it before it is too late!"

"Stupid old Carvel!"

She went up to him, patted him lightly on the cheeks with rosy fingers, and looked up at him with that divine winsomeness which comes only to untroubled eighteen.

"Now you have put daddy in a bad humor again, and he ought not to be worried when he is right in the midst of that wonderful new book of his!"

Carvel Downing groaned with impatience, but the nearness of his sweetheart overpowered his annoyance, and he caught her in his arms and kissed her. But his face was still pale from the stormy interview he had just had with Professor Horace Stardale.

"Grace, I am still going to talk to you about this matter," he said firmly, leading her to the settee by the cozy grate, where two small logs were crackling. "Don't try to hush me up. If you are going to marry me, you have got to begin to hear what I have to say now, regardless of what you do afterward!"

"Oh! All right!" she agreed resignedly. "But it won't do any good!"

He saw that she was comfortably seated, then took a few rapid turns up and down this room.

"There are some ugly rumors in my office about your friend, Dr. Oom Taum," he began at last. "That is what I tried to talk to your father about, but he wouldn't hear me!"

Grace made a pretty face at him.

"Of course daddy wouldn't listen. You know that papa is writing a book on something about Siam. And you know that Dr. Oom Taum is from Siam. He is helping daddy enormously in his work. And besides, he is a real friend. I think he is a saint!"

"I think he is a devil!" proclaimed Downing savagely. He took another turn up and down the room. "I may be a young and imaginative detective," he added, "but it is a fact, isn't it that I am getting ahead as one of the district attorney's assistants? It is a fact, isn't it, that we ought to know what we are doing? I tell you there are ugly stories about this Doctor Oom Taum. Down in the office we don't like his ways. Nobody knows where he came from. No one knows where he's going to. Nobody knows what he's up to. He's nothing but a heathen Siamese Chinaman, than whom there is nothing worse. They're fiends!"

"Ooh—ooh!" cooed Grace mockingly. "Just to think that any one could talk about poor Doctor Oom like that! Why, he's divine! He's the only Siamese poet in the world. All the papers admit his genius. His seances down in Washington Square are the talk of New York. And he's such a gentleman!"

"The devil knows his Chesterfield," retorted Downing grimly. "I told your father I didn't think he should trust you at those infernal seances. I won't have you going there alone. And instead of your father appreciating the danger, he practically orders me out of the house—nearly put me bodily out of his study—and told me to mind my own business. Well, that's what I am doing. You, Grace, are my business, and I am going to protect you. I won't have——"

The maid entered the room and interrupted his remarks by presenting a silver salver, on which lay a card, exceedingly long and narrow. Grace took it, and then smiled at Carvel Downing wickedly.

"It's Doctor Oom Taum now!" she cried gleefully. "Admit him, Sarah!"

Silence fell between them while they waited—a silence that was ominous. Downing stood with folded arms, grimly watching Grace as she perkingly rearranged her hair, to look as presentable as possible for her mysterious visitor.

She had just completed her labors when the celebrated Doctor Oom Taum entered the room.

He was an extraordinary personage. Tall, and lean, and yellow, with a flat nose and black, cavernous nostrils, he had a truly Mongol aspect, especially his eyes. These were small and slanted in his cheeks, black and canden with an unchanging glow of curious enthusiasm. They were the eyes of a fanatic. Yet his walk was deliberate, almost languid; a drooping kind of certainty was in his movements, concealing, Downing felt certain, extraordinary energy.

It was the first time the young detective had ever looked at him, and all his feelings, as expressed to Grace, were redoubled now. With almost uncontrollable revulsion he saw the girl he loved rush forward and seize the mystic's long yellow hands in joyous welcome. This sleek and mysterious Oriental, garbed in Fifth avenue raiment, but with heathen eyes, filled him with foreboding.

"Good-evening, my child!" Doctor Oom said benevolently, but still clasping Grace's hands between his own. "Who is this young person?"

The "young person" referred to was Mr. Carvel Downing, and Mr. Carvel Downing felt like choking the man who asked the question.

"Oh, let me present him," caroled Grace, and accordingly the youngest member of the district attorney's detective force was formally presented. Doctor Oom Taum gravely acknowledged the introduction and said solemnly:

"Young Downing, did it ever occur to you that the earth is the only planet which has a bass clef of suffering to complete its chord?"

The insufferable and belittling way in which Doctor Oom addressed him further riled Car-

vel Downing, and he did not trust himself to reply to his pompous philosophy. But this did not annoy Doctor Oom.

"The khamsin winds of the hot desert blow all day, but in the evening come the stars!" said the doctor solemnly, the foreign accent of his tones adding a strange dignity to his words. Grace looked at Downing, as if to convey: "Didn't I tell you his poetry was wonderful?"

"And now, where is Professor Stardale?" asked Doctor Oom.

Before Grace could reply the study door was opened, and a gray-haired, bent old man emerged, wearing an overcoat and a silk hat and carrying a cane. It was Grace's father, Professor Stardale.

"Greetings, illustrious doctor!" he said, coming forward eagerly.

"And to you, my friend, greeting and the golden blessings of fortune," returned the man from Siam softly. "How comes the book?"

"Well!" Stardale assured him. "But I am hoping for some help from you during our walk. Are you quite ready?"

"Quite! Except that I want a word alone with your daughter. In fact, I was in a trance last evening, and have a communication for her. Will you excuse us?"

His commanding grin, exposing rows of yellow but perfect teeth, included the professor and Downing. Without waiting for reply from either, he drew Grace over into the projecting bay window, where the curtains concealed them.

Downing whirled fiercely on the old professor, ready to renew his attack. But he got no further. The old man held up a warning hand.

"Don't you dare to resume your conversation!" he said. "I won't have it. I won't have it. It's nonsense! It's just plain nonsense, that's all it is. I'm going to sit down, so I'll save my strength for our walk. Doctor Oom has such tireless legs I find it hard to keep up with him."

With the sigh of the feeble-aged, the old man sank into a chair and drew out his watch. He sat regarding its dial thoughtfully. For a few moments Downing stood watching him, wondering if there were any avenue of approach that would get for him a sympathetic hearing. But the old man sat there, a very image in the flesh of obduracy. He kept looking at his watch, as if the slowly moving hands fascinated his mind.

The young detective grew impatient. With an imprecation muttered he turned and strode toward the curtains. He pulled them rudely aside.

"How long are you two going to stay in there talking?" he demanded, unable to keep jealousy from his tone.

"Carvel!" protested Grace, indignant.

"Never mind!" intruded the silken voice of Doctor Oom. "In my dear country we have a maxim, 'The sandal tree imparts its fragrance, even to the axe which hews it!' The axe of young Downing's jealousy has hewed into my enjoyment of your company, sweet Grace, but the fragrance of my nature shall overlook young Downing's rudeness!"

"You——"

Angry oaths were leaping to Carvel Downing's lips, but an impulsive hand was put up against his mouth just in time. Grace was too quick; she had avoided a scene. Quickly putting her arm through Carvel's, secretly thrilled at the quality of love revealed in his jealousy, she drew him past the curtains and into the room.

But there she screamed—a long, piercing cry.

"Look!" she cried. "Oh, dear God! Look there!"

She pointed haggardly toward the chair in which the aged Professor Horace Stardale had just a moment before been seated.

Professor Stardale's silk hat, his black cutaway coat, his pin-stripe trousers, his gray gloves, his gnarled walking-stick, all were in exactly the same position as they had been three minutes before.

But inside the clothes reposed not the flesh and blood of Professor Horace Stardale, but the trembling frame of a skeleton, holding the opened gold watch in its long palm!

Had some unspeakable black magic slain Professor Stardale and stripped him of his blood and flesh in the lightning passage of three minutes?

Or—if not that—what *had* happened to him?

CHAPTER TWO

WHO? WHEN? HOW?

THE appalling and incredible spectacle of the skeleton in the chair froze them with horror.

After her first outcry Grace stood quivering and speechless, her hands clasped before her, her face ashen, her eyes fixed on the grisly thing.

Carvel Downing was scarcely less affected. He found it impossible to believe the evidence of his own eyes. He was a hard-headed young detective, who dealt in facts and insisted that there was an explanation for everything.

But what explanation would fit this miracle?

Had he not seen Professor Stardale sitting in that chair not three minutes ago? Hadn't he heard the old man rebuking him for attempting to renew their argument? Hadn't he watched him sit down and pull out his watch?

And now wasn't he looking at that very watch, its chain dangling unharnessed, the old-fashioned timepiece in the bony clutch of dead and wasted fingers? This skeleton was real, tangible, unquestionable. About his unfleshed shoulder-blades was draped the frock-coat of Professor Stardale, and through the sleeves of that coat protruded the wrists and hand bones of an anatomical specimen! Upon its bare skull, at a horridly rakish angle, reposed the silk hat of the professor. It wore the professor's shoes and socks, but the underwear, the vest, the collar and the blue polka-dot tie had disappeared, along with the professor's skin and flesh and aristocratic blood.

It is not surprising that the young attorney felt dazed; that his reason reeled. Vainly his mind darted this way and that in search of some logical explanation. Was it possible the old professor was playing an inhuman joke upon them?

Instantly Downing rejected the theory. He knew the professor too well. He was utterly devoid of a sense of humor, and such clowning was inconceivable.

What then remained?

Downing's mind went blank when he got that far. There was nothing else he could imagine. All these thoughts had squirmed through his consciousness in the first few instants of unmitigated bewilderment, before he had had time to think of the stricken girl beside him.

Doctor Oom Taum's reaction to the extraordinary event was even more remarkable.

He had seen it last. As he emerged from the curtains that hung before the window he had heard Grace scream. Then he had come forward suddenly, and a slight hissing sound issued from his thick lips.

And while Grace stood there, voiceless in the shock of beholding what sat in the chair, and Carvel Downing remained thunderstruck, his brain rocketing in acrobatic efforts to understand what had happened, Doctor Oom sank to his knees.

Down he knelt, his palms flat one against the other, while he began muttering a singular jargon of odd and harsh sounds—all monosyllables, and all in some foreign, outlandish tongue.

His gibberish awakened Downing to the realities of the situation like the sting of a whip.

"Cut that out!" he said shortly, and turned to Grace. "Come, dear!" he pleaded gently. "Let me take you to your room!"

She turned her stricken eyes toward the handsome, tender young man, and some of the horror in them softened at his solicitude.

"It's so strange!" she murmured. "It's so awful! What has happened? Who put that —that there? Where has daddy gone to?"

Her questions stabbed the heart of Downing. Despite the grotesque atmosphere of the entire affair, Downing had felt certain from the first that Professor Stardale was dead. More than that, he felt he had been murdered. The theory that this was a substitute skeleton he had rejected because it necessarily implied the old man's connivance. And that, he knew, was impossible.

But Grace did not believe that. Her question showed that she had never even admitted the idea to herself. She was simply frightened at the skeleton, but her father, she felt sure, was safe somewhere else.

"What does it all mean?" she cried, breaking into tears as Downing drew her to him.

He only patted her softly on the shoulder, while the monotone of Doctor Oom Taum,

still on his knees, still croaking out his endless prayers, sounded eerily in the gathering gloom.

"I said cut that out!" said Downing sharply. "Can't you see you are making it harder for Miss Stardale. Now cut it out!"

With lithe dignity the sleekly arrayed Doctor Oom Taum rose to his feet.

"My prayer is ended!" he said solemnly. "Otherwise, young Downing, I should not have heeded your vulgar words. I am from a country where death is a solemn thing. In its presence one must recite the prayers you have just heard. Evidently your customs here are not so serious!"

A silence fell upon those three—a silence of the strangest uncertainty. What were they going to do? The situation was unparalleled in the experience of Downing. The sudden and inexplicable transformation which had overtaken Professor Stardale, complicated with the hysterical nature of Grace, made the whole situation tangled and twisted.

Yet something had to be done! Something had to be done immediately!

"Will you go to your room, dearest?" asked Downing softly to the weeping Grace. "Just to rest yourself. I can find out what everything is about, and then in five or ten minutes, or maybe half an hour, you and I can talk it all over. Won't you do that for me?"

She agreed to his insistence at last, and he led her to the door of the room. When he came back he found Doctor Oom Taum still standing in the centre of the room, as dignified and unruffled, as unconcerned and apparently as incurious as if there were no frock-coated skeleton in their presence.

"You do not seem surprised at what has occurred?" began Downing, his voice almost an accusation.

"I am not surprised," returned Doctor Oom gravely. "I have learned wisdom; I have sat at the feet of my master, among the white company of yoga in the snowy retreats of the Himalayas. I have listened to the prayer rattles of the little fluttering wheels in the windows of Lhassa. My third eye has opened! I have seen and heard and smelled and tasted and felt of many strange things. Wisdom is mine. I have lost the capacity for surprise!"

All this he delivered quietly, gravely, with head bent forward so that his chin rested on his chest. His dignity was superb, his poise complete.

But he managed only to irritate Downing. The coolness of the man in the presence of such a phenomenon irked his nerves. More than that, it stirred his suspicions.

"You do not think it odd that a man should turn into a skeleton, practically before your eyes?" he demanded savagely.

Doctor Oom spread wide his hands in deprecation.

"I have seen flowers bloom and decay," he replied. "It is a gradual but a certain process. I have seen—since I came to America—moving photographs of growing and withering flowers. In the photography the movement was accelerated, so that you beheld the transformation. It was like some one turning the hands of a clock quietly. Perhaps that is what has happened to our friend here. Some one speeded up his final dissolution, and he was a heap of bones, almost before he was a cadaver!"

Downing turned away. The man's glib smugness was rousing his antagonism; presently, if he did not watch himself, they would be quarreling. And Downing did not want to quarrel with Doctor Oom Taum—not just yet. There was a strange bee buzzing around his professional honnet, and for a little while Downing was content to let it buzz unswatted.

"By Jove!" he suddenly exclaimed.

"And why do you swear by the discredited deity of the Greeks?" inquired Doctor Oom suavely. In his tone Downing detected—or so he fancied—a remote tinge of apprehension. It was as if the Siamese mystic were fearful the young detective had discovered something of importance.

"Look here!" said Downing. "I don't know what has happened here, of course! A great deal depends on whether that awful monstrosity in the chair is really the remains of Professor Stardale, or some medical college property. If the latter is true, it is fair to assume that the professor is simply somewhere else, and as safe as I am!"

"Yes! As safe as you are!" repeated Doctor Oom with oily emphasis.

"On the other hand, if this *is* the skeleton

of Grace's father, then we have a murder mystery on our hands. There is no room for any spontaneous combustion bunk, or anything like that. A mysterious murder, yes, but murder—not suicide. A man can kill himself, but he can't make himself a skeleton. And if it is murder, then we have got to call the police, and the coroner will be here, and then the men from headquarters and the reporters—and all that will mean hell for poor little Grace!"

"And what do you propose to do about it?" asked Doctor Oom Taum in the condescending way in which one may address a little child, if one doesn't know much about children.

"I'm going to prove that this is, or is not, the skeleton of Professor Stardale!" Downing's voice was emphatic.

"Wait! You can't do that!" protested Oom Taum earnestly. "Surely you have laws in this country. You are a law student and should know something about them. Until the police come you are forbidden to touch——"

Downing forced a grin at him; a grim smile of defiance.

"I'll take a chance on that!" he said, and walked directly over to the skeleton. For a moment he remained looking at the thing seated in the chair with feelings of repulsion and intense curiosity strangely blending in his heart. He did not like skeletons. But the amazing enigma propounded by the presence of this skeleton, the baffling problem concealed within it, directly intrigued his imagination.

"Touch it then!" called Doctor Oom Taum mockingly. "Feel if the bones are still warm!"

"That," replied Downing, "is a sensible suggestion!"

He carefully put forth his hand and touched the exposed ribs. His hand recoiled at the first sensation registered on the flesh of his fingers. The bones *were* warm! In the utter loathsomeness of his sensations, Downing found himself recalling the feel of a chicken bone lying on a plate. This skeleton felt just like that.

"If it's warm, it has only recently been exposed to the air," suggested Doctor Oom Taum. "A fresh skeleton, so to speak!"

"Go to the devil!" replied Downing.

He rose from his bent-over attitude, and with great care lifted the silk hat from the skull. Then he leaned over and studied the rounded top of the head with an intent scrutiny that so impressed Doctor Oom he came over to see what the young lawyer was looking at.

"Do you see anything, my young friend?" he asked, a trace of eagerness—and, Downing suspected, fear—creeping into his voice.

"I do!"

Downing turned and smiled mockingly back into the yellow face of the man from Siam. His manner betokened triumph, even before he spoke.

"Two years ago," he resumed exultingly, "Professor Stardale was in an automobile accident. He was taken to the Roosevelt Hospital, and there it was found that his head was injured. It was necessary to trepan his skull—to cut a piece completely out of the bone. I was present at that operation at his daughter's request. Just now I was looking for the mark on the skull.

"It wasn't there—that's all!"

CHAPTER THREE

TAKING ANOTHER LOOK

THE announcement seemed both to astound and disquiet the dignified man from Siam.

"You mean there is no hole in the top of the head?" he queried in amazement.

"There is no hole in the top of the head," confirmed Downing.

"Then it can't be the professor's skeleton?"

"Exactly. It can't be the professor's skeleton!"

"Then whose skeleton is it?"

"Exactly. You get at things readily, Doctor Oom. That is a question in which the police are bound to be immensely interested. Unquestionably they will want to know whose skeleton it is, and who owns it now, and how it got here—and also where Professor Stardale got to when it so abruptly took place!"

"Yes!"

Doctor Oom seemed on the point of saying something else, when he started perceptibly and shut his lips tight. What the occasion of his sudden halt could be Downing could only surmise. But the observant young sleuth had not overlooked one coincident fact.

A long, low whistle, drawn out to a note of almost indistinguishable fineness, had sounded somewhere down in the street. It might have been some capricious sound made by a passing schoolboy. But it was not repeated. It sounded just once, clear and unmistakable. Immediately on hearing it Doctor Oom had closed his mouth.

And now he seized his stick and hat and gloves and stood ready to depart. He carried off his insolence until the last.

"I take it, young Downing," he said blandly, "that whatever turn affairs may take, the police will sooner or later want to know all about the singular and rather hideous matter we have witnessed—you and I and sweetest Grace. In that case, they may wish to interrogate me. I shall be pleased to be interrogated by the American police. It will be a new experience. Are they as stupid as they are reputed to be? You know my address—the seance rooms, where I read from my poems, are just off Washington Square, in what you call your Greenwich Village. It's an unkempt place, by the way. My regards to Miss Grace, sweetest Grace, and all that; and also to her father—if you find him! Good afternoon, young Downing!"

He bowed and twirled his walking-stick and left the room.

"There! Thank God, he's out of here!" breathed Downing to himself. "Now I can get busy on this business and probably get things right without having to call the police in at all. Let me see; the first thing—no, the first thing I shall do is to go see how my own little Grace is feeling."

Her door was closed, and he rapped very softly. No answer came from within the room. He wondered if she had fainted, and then felt reassured. Perhaps she had dropped asleep in the weariness that always follows any great emotional shock. Sleep would be best for her after all. He would not knock any louder. Accordingly he crept back down the hall and re-entered the living-room.

All was as he had left it. The skeleton still held the watch, and the ticking of that watch was the only sound in the room. Alone, Downing stood there and considered what he should do.

Subconsciously he had been hoping every moment that the hall door would open to admit the shrunken figure of Professor Stardale. How relieved Downing would feel to see him again! Then they could tackle the appearance of this skeleton together and with an easier mind.

After all, Downing decided that the clue to the entire matter must rest in the skeleton itself. There was no other source of investigation open, anyhow. One just had to look to the skeleton to unravel its own mystery.

It was gloomy in the living-room now, with the subtle approach of autumn dusk spreading its shadows over the place. Yet Downing did not feel like turning on the lights; there was an atmosphere about the entire matter that he hesitated to dispel.

Determined to seek more intently for some clue to the problem, he went back to the skeleton and resumed his examination of the skull.

Certainly it might have passed for Professor Stardale's skull. It was singularly like the old scholar's long, lean head, shaped much in the mould of an egg. It was about the same size, too. No great stretch of the imagination was needed to endow those bones with life and fancy it was his, after all.

A gasp came from the lips of Carvel Downing. He bent closer, vainly seeking to deny the evidences of his own eyesight.

But he was not mistaken.

There was a hole in the skull now—a hole in the exact place where Professor Stardale had his trepanning operation!

CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT DOWNING FOUND IN THE HALL

CARVEL DOWNING was not a superstitious man. He did not believe in ghosts and insisted on the trustworthiness of the five human senses.

But now his faith in those five human senses

led him inevitably into the gripping challenge of the impossible.

He knew he had not been deceived. If his life were at stake on it, he would have sworn that when first he examined that head it had no hole in it. Yet there it was now!

What sinister force, what horrible intelligence, unseen but menacing, was at work in these rooms?

The first fantastic dread that seized him passed as quickly as it came. He shook it off easily. There was something at work here; something treacherous, malicious and cruel. But whatever it was, it was human—it was no spectral, disembodied influence. It was alive, and he was going to find it, fight it, crush it.

Should he call Grace and tell her what he had found?

Instantly he decided not to do that. Let Grace take what rest she could. God only knew what lay before her in the days to come. That her father was killed; that he had been slain, and that most foully and mysteriously, no longer could be doubted. She would have enough trouble; she would need all the sustaining power that rest could give her. No, he would proceed alone.

He turned on the electric switch, and the soft clusters of light bloomed into mild radiance. They made the skeleton in the chair a more terrifying spectacle than ever. A curious illusion was created by the lights; the curtains threw a shadow over the face, endowing it with an expression of imminence, as if it were on the point of opening its jaws and uttering, once and for all, its store of secrets.

This fanciful idea came to Downing, but he dismissed it and set sternly to the task of finding out what he could.

It was not long before he came upon an astonishing discovery.

He had gone back to the skeleton, determined to wrest from it some clue to its mystery. when he noticed the glistening effect of all the bones—an effect that had been absent before he had turned on the lights.

He touched them and found that they were damp and cold!

Downing was immensely startled. Here was a new incredibility! Little more than half an hour before he had touched these very ribs and found them dry and warm. Now they were covered with moisture, as if recently withdrawn from a bath.

What was behind these accursed enigmas? Huge oaths rose furiously to the young man's lips. He felt himself getting deeper and deeper into a swirling maze of dark and unfathomable mystery. His clear brain resented the puzzles that he could not solve.

There must be some explanation. Suppose—by Jove, yes—suppose there had been another substitution? Was it possible? He had been absent from the room only a few minutes—while he was listening at Grace's door. But much could have been done in that time by cunning, stealthy hands and feet.

Yet if any one had stolen into the apartment, would not the maid have known? Where was the maid anyhow?

Stalking across the room, he went to the door and called softly to the girl, but though he called many times he received no answer.

It was not her afternoon off; that he knew positively. She should be in the apartment. Consumed with annoyance at being balked on every hand, he hurried out of the room and started down the hallway.

But in the middle of the darkened corridor he found the answer to at least one of his questions.

In one glance he saw why the maid had not answered his summons.

Prone on the floor she lay, bound hand and feet with piano wire and gagged with thick bandages. There she lay, a helpless prisoner, and as he bent over her Downing found she was unconscious.

CHAPTER FIVE

A SEARCH AND ITS REWARD

BY the time Downing had cut the maid free from her bonds and had removed her gag she had recovered her senses. On finding herself conscious she broke into immediate tears. All of Downing's patience and skill were required to quiet her, but at last he succeeded.

"Now tell me, Bertha," he urged her, "what happened to you?"

Her story was a very simple one, and Downing was disappointed to find that it shed so little real light on the mystery.

She had been preparing tea in the kitchen when she fancied she heard a noise in the corridor.

"It sounded like some one creeping in on tiptoe," she explained. "And that made me wonder who it could be."

She hurried out into the hallway, and as she did so a hand came out of the darkness and clamped over her mouth, while some one struck her on the head. After that she remembered nothing whatever until she awoke to find Downing bending over her.

"Now," reflected Downing audibly, "I wonder what they did that to you for?"

The young man's detective instincts were now thoroughly aroused. Some kind of vast criminal conspiracy he felt was in the air—something that affected both the murdered professor and his daughter, whom Downing loved dearer than life itself. In the handling of criminal matters pertaining to the detective office Downing had during the last two years achieved some notable victories. Though comparatively young—he was scarcely over thirty—he had nevertheless been able to track down some notorious criminals where professional operatives at headquarters and in the famous agencies had fallen down.

Now he faced the biggest mystery of which he had ever heard. And in this he had the deepest kind of personal interest. His sweetheart was definitely involved. With a thrill of gallant determination he made up his mind that he would solve the whole tangle of puzzles before the police were notified, so Grace would be spared all possible embarrassment.

In pursuit of this plan he now made his way to the kitchen. Though he was an intimate of the place, he had been in the kitchen only once or twice; now he wanted to fix the design of the apartment clearly in his mind. It was not long before a part of the mystery, at least, grew less clouded.

The kitchen opened on the fire-escape. The apartment was on the second floor, and the fire-escape led down to a small private alleyway seldom traversed. Thus an intruder could easily gain entrance to the Stardale quarters through the kitchen window.

"You were in the way," said Downing, addressing the maid. "They wanted a clear road for what they were doing, and were not willing to run chances."

"Who? And what were they doing?" asked the maid.

She did not know of the skeleton. Purposely Downing had revived her in the dining-room. He wanted to calm her, not drive her into dizzier flights of hysteria.

The question she had asked was of the utmost moment. "Who? And what were they doing?" That was just it. Somehow Downing felt sure the unspeakable Doctor Oom Taum had something to do with it. Of course, it might be mere prejudice. But he couldn't rid his mind of the idea. Downing was something of a psychologist, and he had not liked the doctor's manner, after the appearance of the skeleton.

In standing there, attempting to reason out what had happened, Downing realized that he must put aside all consideration of the grotesquerie in which he found himself and deal with the facts as they transpired.

By now he felt certain there had been two skeletons in the living-room.

Why there had been even one he did not pause to worry about just then. The fact was there had been one, at least, and, Downing felt certain, two.

Then, Downing reasoned, events must have moved very swiftly indeed. He pictured the old professor quietly seated in his chair looking at his watch. Suppose that out on the fire-escape hovered two or three conspirators, and that with them they had a skeleton dressed in clothes the exact duplicate of those worn by Professor Stardale. "An outlandish assumption, but let us follow it," argued Downing to himself.

One of them gets into the kitchen during the absence of the maid and makes his way to the corridor. There he deliberately lures the maid into its shadows, overcomes her, and knocks her senseless. Then the coast is clear. The others are called, and with their burden they come creeping down the hallway. With his back to them, old Stardale is seated near the door. All the others are engaged in conversation in the wind

It would be an easy matter to knock out the

old professor with one silent blow and drag him out, leaving the skeleton in the place.

Why do all that?

That was the refuting question that rose in Downing's mind, but he refused to heed it. That explanation might be the last thing given him. Let him follow where his thoughts led him.

But what had they been doing with the old professor after they dragged him out?

What unspeakable fate had they inflicted on him, that presently they could come stealing back and replace the dummy skeleton with the actual frame of the old gentleman?

Here Downing's mind stopped in its course. He could not go beyond that. Yet something told him that thus far he had been correct in his assumptions. Why these things had been done he could not surmise. Yet there must be some big and compelling motive back of it all.

He stood there by the kitchen stove while all these thoughts traveled the courses of his brain. The motive! If only he could hit on that the rest might be easy.

Perhaps there was something in the past life of Professor Stardale that might shed some light on the problem. To this suggestion Downing turned eagerly. He knew very little of the professor's life story—if there were anything in his past connected with these occurrences they would probably be hidden facts—yet there was just the chance that he might hit on something that would point the way to a solution.

The professor had been born in this country, he knew. He knew also that he had won high academic honors during his student days, not only in this country, but in Heidelberg, Vienna, and Paris. Then he had come back to accept a professorship in an obscure Virginia university. A year later Columbia had called him, and from there he had gone to Harvard.

His field of teaching had been confined to the history and customs of primitive people, and later he had specialized on Oriental nations. It had been in pursuit of these studies he had made a journey halfway around the world to get first-hand information on some of the customs of the little known country of Siam. That had been two years before, and Grace had accompanied him on his trip. Grace had been enchanted with the quaint city of Bangkok.

In this brief résumé of what he knew of Professor Stardale's career, Downing could find nothing to indicate where his suspicions might find root. Yet—and here his heart leaped up with all the force of a discovery—perhaps!

A wonderful idea had suddenly come to him! It opened up a new avenue of thought.

"I must ask Grace about this!" he said and turned to the still trembling serving maid.

"Try to awaken Miss Grace," he said quickly. "I need to see her now on a matter of the gravest importance!"

The girl gave him an odd glance, then turned and quietly left the room. Almost immediately she returned, but now her face was filled with wonder and fear.

"Miss Grace's room is all torn up!" she said. "The place looks as if there had been an awful fight in there. And Miss Grace is gone!"

CHAPTER SIX

DOWN IN WASHINGTON SQUARE

IT suddenly came over Carvel Downing that his present position was desperate.

How long Grace had been gone he could not know. But he felt certain she had not been there when he tapped on her door. Fool that he had been not to suspect! The father killed in some secret and terrible manner, and now the lovely girl stolen and taken away to what fate only God knew!

He thrust the girl hastily aside and rushed down the hall. As he came to the door of her little pink-and-gold boudoir he saw that the maid had not exaggerated. The room was in indiscriminate confusion. It was as if Grace had given some one vigorous resistance before allowing herself to be overpowered.

Yet how had it all been done so silently? He had heard not the slightest sound come from the room.

It was very plain to see how they had carried her away. One window, at the end of the room, opened on a fire-escape that paralleled the one in the kitchen. Down this they

had undoubtedly carried her, concealed by the gloom of twilight.

But where had they taken her?

The theory that had come suddenly to Downing, as he considered the past life of Professor Stardale, now was assuming the proportions of a conviction. He had no substantial evidence by which to prove it, even to himself. It was more like a hunch than anything else. But Downing was determined to follow that hunch. One reason was that he saw nothing else that could sensibly be done.

Of course there was always the possibility that Grace had merely slipped out, but that was largely discounted by the appearance of the room, with its torn silken coverlets and overturned chairs, plainly telling of a struggle.

No! He would follow that hunch immediately. Perhaps even now he was too late. But there was something he must do before he started, and take his chances on having decided right.

Ignoring the fluttering, puzzled questions of the maid, Downing hurried to the study of Professor Stardale, from which he had been summarily ejected only an hour or so before. How much had happened to them all since then!

His first glimpse of the professor's study confirmed his suspicions. This room, too, was torn with confusion, as if vandal hands had been bent on wrecking it. Papers, particularly, were heaped in scattered disarray all over the floor. Drawers had been ransacked. Private packets had been unsealed and their contents hurled right and left.

"They got what they wanted!" muttered Downing. "Now I wonder what it was?"

But he had seen enough to convince him that he was on the right track. Now he went to the telephone and called two numbers, one after the other. During these two conversations he spoke briskly, commandingly, issuing curt, prompt orders in the tone of a man accustomed to immediate obedience.

He had been speaking with men connected with the district attorney's office and to police headquarters.

Having detailed instructions which he wished carried out, he took an additional measure of precaution before quitting the apartment. He borrowed a revolver from the professor's desk. His next move was to take the silk hat worn by the skeleton and carry it over to the light. He held it gingerly by the extreme edge while he studied it with profound attention.

"There!" he said in a low tone of self-congratulation. "I knew they wouldn't have thought of that!"

He had found a clue in the hat—fingerprints on the silk that might prove valuable—and turned to call the maid. He was about to give her instructions when she came to the door and caught her first glimpse of the skeleton. She gave a little squawk and dropped senseless at his feet.

But Downing had no time to revive her. He hurried to a clothes closet and tenderly placed the hat where no one could reach it without difficulty, and then hurried from the apartment.

One of his instructions had been that a taxi be waiting for him at the door. It was there when he came out into the darkened street.

"Drive me to No. 18 Summerwell Chambers in Mock street, near Washington Square," he told the chauffeur. "And never mind the traffic laws. This is on business for the district attorney."

"Yes, sir!" clucked the chauffeur, and they were off.

So seriously did the driver take Downing's commands that the license number of his machine was written down by fourteen crossing cops at fourteen different corners. The result was they shot under the Washington arch in less than a quarter of an hour, and presently Downing found himself at the door behind which Professor Oom Taum held his mystic seances and read his Siamese poems.

He knocked many times, but there was no response to his repeated blows on the door. As he waited and knocked his anxiety grew by leaps and bounds, and finally he kicked the door savagely.

A slatternly woman with a baby at her breast suddenly appeared from the darkness in the rear of the hallway.

"What cher raisin' all the hallelooyah about?" she snapped.

"I have got to see Doctor Oom Taum imme-

diately. Where is he?" Downing's voice held a ring of command that changed the woman's voice to a propitiating whine.

"Oh, I see, sir. You wanted to see Doctor Oom? I'm sorry. 'Deed, I'm awful sorry. He ain't here no more?"

"Where's he gone?"

"Why, back to wherever he came from. They moved this morning. I heard they had a private boat what was going to take them back to Cyanide, or wherever it is they come from!"

To Siam!

They were gone—perhaps even now they were on the high seas—and where was Grace Stardale?

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE UNEXPECTED ALWAYS HAPPENS!

IF they had a boat that was taking them back to Siam they would never have talked about it!

That was the first encouraging thought that came to Downing. Hitherto they had always been one step ahead of him. Now he was going to get ahead of them.

"Have you got a key to their apartment?" he asked the woman.

"Sure! I'm the landlady!" she answered importantly. "It's two hundred dollars a month."

"Let me in!" he commanded. "I'm from the police!"

She let him in quickly. The rooms were practically bare; from published descriptions Downing remembered that Doctor Oom had fitted up the place elaborately, but now, except for one or two plain chairs, there was nothing but three large empty rooms. He found a trapdoor that led down to a damp cellar, like an empty pool, but it, too, was deserted.

Not a clue!

For half an hour Downing searched desperately. He looked in every little nook and corner, hoping to find some damning little scrap of something that would put him on the track. But he found nothing. They had covered up their trail perfectly.

He felt certain there was something wrong about that information about the boat returning to Siam. Doctor Oom was too clever to let an important bit of information like that leak out.

"Look here!" he said to the woman. "I've got to find Doctor Oom. It's a matter of life and death with me! What did they do with their furniture!"

He passed a ten-dollar bill into her grimy hand and her eyes lighted avariciously.

"I did hear something!" she confessed.

"What was it? Speak, quick!"

"I heard one of the attendants giving instructions to the moving men. He had a hard time speaking English and I had to help him out. He sent the stuff to a place uptown!"

"Where?"

"Let me think. It was way up in Bronxville. They've taken an old farmhouse, back from the road. Let me think. It was on the corner of Adamson road and the Curly turnpike. They was to turn in there and follow the private road up to the house!"

"That's enough! Good-by!" cried Downing, and rushed out of the house.

"They moved the stuff yesterday morning!" the woman yelled after him, and he tucked away that morsel of information in his mind as he ran down the steps.

He was about to jump into his taxi when a little bent figure leaped out of the shadows and clutched his arm.

Downing whirled and nearly dropped in his tracks from the shock and surprise. He got a clear glimpse from the headlight of the face of an old man in ill-fitting clothes.

It was Professor Horace Stardale!

CHAPTER EIGHT

AT BAY

IT was not a ghost. It was not an apparition. Nor was it a phantom of Downing's imagination. It was Professor Stardale in the flesh.

He was gibbering incoherently; almost maddened by some frightful experience from which he had escaped. He was chattering, but his words were disconnected.

"Stop it!" ordered Downing, when the first shock of surprise had passed. "Jump in the cab! Boy!"

He rattled off his instructions to the chauffeur. Then he turned and gave three clear notes of a whistle. He waved his arms as if in signal. Then he leaped into the machine, and away they sped northward toward Westchester. Three machines followed, well behind.

Professor Stardale had fallen back exhausted in the cab. For many blocks—not, in fact, until they had passed the whirlpool of Forty-second street and Fifth avenue—did Downing attempt to question him. By that time the old scholar had quieted down.

"Now, professor," said Downing grimly, "I know by the looks of you that you have been suffering the tortures of the damned. But you have got to pull yourself together. They've got Grace!"

"Oh, my God!" groaned the old man.

"Buck up! We're going to save her right now. But I've got to find out all I can. Be a man, now. Pull yourself together and answer my questions. I've figured this thing slightly, but not completely. Tell me all about it. But first answer my questions!"

"I will!" promised Stardale, making a brave effort to compose himself.

"You were writing a book on the Siamese religions. In it you were going to expose some of the abominable practices of the Siamese priests. You were going to reveal what went on in their secret pagodas. Isn't that right!"

"Yes!" agreed the old man eagerly.

"This Doctor Oom Taum was a Siamese priest. That fact I have just confirmed in a telephone conversation with one of my agents. I believe he was sent to this country to destroy your records and kill you so that you could never publish your book!"

"Yes!" cried the old man. "That was exactly it. He told me that before he—before he—oh!"

"Come, now! You were sitting in the chair when all this started. What occurred then?"

"I was struck on the head from behind. When I recovered consciousness I was in an empty room in his apartment down in Washington Square. Oom was alone with me. He told me that he had been commissioned by the high priest of Siam to destroy me and all the evidences I had collected during my stay in Siam. You see, I had gained the confidence of some of the younger priests and had, bit by bit, gained all the knowledge I had come to learn. Later the old priests had discovered this. My informants, so Oom told me, were slain by slow torture. Then they sent Oom to America with a whole retinue of attendants, and he posed as a poet.

"He gained my friendship, found out all the arrangements of my house, wormed himself into my confidence. Finally, with fiendish cunning, he made all his plans, and he told me, in this empty room where he talked, that he wanted me to meet the sacred Gar-Tahar of the Temple.

"You do not shudder, Downing. You do not know the priest craft of Siam. You do not know the Gar-Tahar!

"But I knew, God help me. The Gar-Tahar is a shark-like monster that appears rarely in southern seas and never anywhere else. It has more teeth and sharper teeth than any other fish in the world, yet it is smaller than the usual shark. It strips its victim's bones clean, but never crunches a bone. Throw a man to a Gar-Tahar and in five minutes a bony skeleton will be floating on the water; the flesh will be meat for the fish and the water will be crimson.

"That was the fate reserved for me!

"Down underneath the apartment in Washington Square they had built a cement pool. How they got the big fish over here undiscovered I cannot guess. But it was in that pool, and it was the mission of the Oom outfit to get me and throw me to that sacred shark. Oom commanded me to remove all my clothing, which I did. Naked and shivering, he thrust me down a trapdoor, where an attendant was waiting. It was the job of this attendant to throw me to the shark.

"Downing, I shall never know where my strength came from in those next few minutes. In my dreadful fright superhuman power seem to flood through my old body, and my brain became acutely, preternaturally alert. As I stepped down the ladder the trap-

door above closed over me. I was in darkness.

"As my hand reached out to steady my descent I found lying in a vacant brickplace in the wall a small iron chisel. My fingers closed around it. I held my hand poised over my head, and when I reached the bottom of the step and a man seized my left arm, I brought down the chisel with all the strength at my command.

"The man fell dead, killed by the blow. I knew I must be quick. I stripped off his clothing and threw him into the pool. Then I got into his clothes. He was after my life. In my own defense I took his. I was thankful that the darkness kept me from seeing what the swish of the water told me was happening. But presently I discerned the bony skeleton floating near the dimly outlined edge of the pool.

"I remarked to you how alert my mind was. I knew that my trepanned skull would identify my head to those who knew me. I knew that I must hide, for Oom would never give up if he thought me free. With my chisel I hastily knocked a hole in the skull in the proper place. Then, leaving the skeleton near the foot of the stairs, I began exploring the cellar. I found a window that let out into a dark alley, and there, in the ill-fitting clothes of the man I had killed, I waited in a torment of fear. Not until I heard your voice did I venture to come out.

"And now you tell me they have Grace?"

"Yes!" replied Downing, who was still cursing at the slowness of the machine in its journey toward Bronxville. "But undoubtedly Oom believes you are dead. He probably has fallen in love with Grace—as such a fiend does fall in love. He wants to abduct her to Siam."

"God forbid!"

"He will, never fear. What I cannot understand is why Oom first introduced a dummy skeleton to impersonate you and later substituted the real one—or the one that he thought was really you, and which actually was his attendant's?"

Apparently there was no explanation for this, and now Carvel Downing ceased to think about it. They were nearing their journey's end. The desert of flathouses in the Bronx was changing to the rolling hills and pleasant estates of Westchester.

The taxi suddenly lurched to a halt, while the chauffeur got out and reconnoitered. He came to the door of the cab and said:

"This is the place. It must be that white house behind those poplars."

Downing agreed. What was transpiring in that lonely-looking house? He turned to the old professor and said sternly:

"I know you want to go with me, but it can't be done. I must do this alone. Wait here for me; I shall bring Grace back to you, or I shall not come back!"

With that promise he was gone.

Creeping carefully up the road toward the house, always in the concealing shadow of the trees, he approached nearer and nearer until at last he could see the house clearly. It was an old-fashioned farmhouse, and had apparently not been used in a long time. There was no sign of life about it.

Downing felt in his hip pocket and reassured himself that the revolver he had carried away from the Stardale apartment was in easy reach. On second thought he drew it, and with this held before him he commenced a circuit of the house, until at last he saw a back door. It was closed.

All seemed quiet around him; he saw and heard no one. Determined to wait no longer, he rushed forward toward the door.

As he did so the door opened and a yellow man, evidently a servant, in ordinary clothes, came out with a bucket in his hand.

He saw Downing at the same moment Downing saw him. He opened his mouth to scream, but before he could utter a word Downing was on him and had flung him to the ground. Two merciless blows he struck the yellow man in the face and left him senseless.

Then he crept into the house. A long dark hall confronted him, and he tiptoed down it swiftly but warily. Then he heard a voice. It was the voice that he loved best in all the world—the high, clear, courageous voice of Grace Stardale.

"You may do with me what you please, but you will never have me alive!" she cried. "Kill me, if you will! I will not be your wife!"

"You would rather be the bride of the Gar-

Tahar?" came the threatening voice of Oom Taum. "His sharp teeth will strip the white flesh from your bones in less time than you can recite your 'Now I lay me down to sleep!' Think, sweetest Grace. I offer to make you a priestess!"

Downing had heard enough. With one rush he covered the intervening space and hurled himself, with drawn revolver, into the room.

A surprise awaited him.

Doctor Oom Taum was standing in the centre of the room grinning carelessly at Downing's revolver.

Grace was bound and helpless in a chair.

"Come in, young Downing!" said Oom triumphantly. "I have been apprised of your coming. Your confederates are in my hands—even the old man who outwitted me, but who will not do so again. Put down your revolver or the man behind you will cut off your head!"

Downing turned to see a yellow man with a huge scimitar uplifted standing behind him.

But that didn't frighten Carvel Downing. Before the astonished Oom Taum knew what had happened Carvel Downing's revolver had barked, and the man with the scimitar was writhing on the floor, felled with one bullet in his chest.

Then the raging young detective whirled to deal with Oom Taum himself.

CHAPTER NINE

DOCTOR OOM TAUM KEEPS HIS VOW

DOWNING'S revolver was directed straight at the head of the man from Siam.

"Surrender or I'll kill you!" he said crisply.

But the next instant he was overpowered. Assistants attracted by the shot had hurried to the scene, and before he knew it Downing was trussed in wires and cords, as helpless as Grace herself.

To add to the seriousness of the situation other attendants brought in Professor Stardale and the white-faced chauffeur. They too were bound.

In the midst of the scene Doctor Oom stood gloating and triumphant. He looked around at them, greedy as a shark himself.

"The Gar-Tahar will not go hungry this evening," he said in suave satisfaction. "I do not know how he will like his new pool below this floor, but you all will help to reconcile him to his new quarters. You must all die, because you all know too much. When they find your bones I shall be back in my beloved Siam; back in my temple robes, a priest in my pagoda. And with me will be my charming white priestess, sweetest Grace. For you shall go with me, sweetest Grace, and you will never get the chance to commit suicide. You will be watched too closely. I would have spared you much if you had consented to go willingly!"

He turned with a wicked leer toward Downing, who was staring in acute grief at the sobbing Grace.

"Young Downing," he said. "I do not know how you tracked me here. You are too cunning, but you have overmatched your wits this time. My spies saw you coming, and we were ready for you—all except my poor Sali, whom you took by surprise at the back door. I congratulate you. Before I throw you to the fish, is there anything you want to know? I would have you die happily, and I know you are a curious man."

"Yes," answered Downing savagely. "Why two skeletons?"

Doctor Oom smiled with wicked amiability.

"Have you forgotten that I am a poet?" he said. "That means I have imagination. I desired to effect an astounding surprise. I wanted to make you Westerners, who doubt our Eastern magic, remember one startling thing. Accordingly I had a duplicate skeleton prepared, and a duplicate set of clothes, exactly like those worn by this old traitor, Stardale. After we threw him to the fish we exchanged the dummy skeleton for the real—only it was not Stardale's, but my poor, holy attendant!"

"That was why one skeleton was dry and warm and the other cold and damp," reflected Downing. But other thoughts were busy in his mind. For the first time he smiled back at Oom Taum.

"You made a vow?" he asked.

"Before the bloody altar of my pagoda I

made a vow," said Oom Taum earnestly. His face assumed its old fanatical expression. "I swore I would prevent Stardale's exposure, and inflict upon him the penalties of our holy creed. I shall keep my word!"

"Maybe!" returned Downing.

At that instant a crashing sound was heard and the trampling of many feet. Oom Taum turned in wild alarm. What was this intrusion?

The next moment a man in blue and brass hurled himself against a yellow-faced Oriental at the doorway and bore him to the ground. Behind him a whole force of New York policemen came streaming into the room with leveled revolvers. They had followed at Downing's telephoned orders, and before entering the house he had ordered the raid in five minutes.

"Seize them all!" said Downing crisply.

But Oom Taum was too quick. His foot shot out and released a bolt, and a trapdoor fell downward, exposing a black, cavernous opening.

"The priest who fails," he screamed, "must himself invoke the penalty intended for his enemy!"

He plunged through the trapdoor and disappeared.

They heard the splash as his body struck the pool, then a moment of silence and then a horrible, gliding, swishing sound.

"What's down there?" asked the sergeant who had led the rescuing party, of the young detective.

But even as they told him they knew it was too late. Poetic justice had overtaken the poetical man from Siam.

Professor Stardale's book on Siam will not appear until next autumn. These facts have been published, with his permission, in advance of his own book. In the meantime Carvel Downing has been taken from the district attorney's office and placed in charge of a new bureau in the detective department, where he is winning his laurels as the brightest mind on the detective force.

It is also only fair to add that Grace—(Grace Downing now; they were married a month after the affair of the man from Siam)—pays very earnest attention to her brilliant husband's counsel. He has never said, 'I told you so!' He isn't that kind of a man. But Grace hasn't forgotten that her father put him out of his study because he was suspicious in the first place of Doctor Oom Taum, the singular man from Siam.

PECULIAR CUSTOMS MARK JAP WEDDING

THE Japanese courting is as apt to start in a flower message as any other way, the love-lorn swain indicating his passion by tossing a pale plum-flower into the latter as the object of regard is carried by him. If she tosses it out his suit is rejected, but if she fastens it at her kimono girdle the affair may go forward.

Another method is for the lover to slip up to his loved one's door at midnight and fasten a spray of blooming celastrus alatus above the door. The next morning he walks by the house. If the spray is still there all is over. But if it has been taken in, or if it has been watered, he knows the maid is his.

The actual terms of the marriage settlement are carried on by a go-between—always a man. A "complimentary present" is then sent, and if it is accepted the bride and her entire family is in honor bound to go forward with the ceremony.

The groom then sends her sixty prescribed gifts that include silk of a certain length and folded in a certain way; garments, silken bags of rice and sweetmeats, and barrels of wine. The latter the bride, as a rule, presents to her parents, and the contents are drunk in cups little larger than a thimble.

The groom also sends a long piece of white silk for the weddding garment, and a piece of very fine gold embroidery to be used as a marriage girdle.

The wedding day is picked by a soothsayer, and there are many days that are prohibited.

Ingenuity of English Convicts

IT is thought by the prison commissioners and officers and by the public generally that such precautions are taken to prevent criminals communicating with each other that it is impossible for them to do so without being detected. It is true that a solid wall divides one cell from another, that they are exercised with a yard or two space between them—of course, with officers in attendance—and that they are not allowed to speak to each other under any pretense; and yet, during a twelve months' imprisonment, which terminated a few years since. I could have communicated with almost any one in the prison, and did, in several instances, without discovery.

I have sat in my cell when the door has been double-locked, and while the officer has been looking direct at me (although I did not know it at the time), and have corresponded with the prisoner in the cell adjacent to mine without the officer suspecting it. This will be the more surprising when it is known that prisons are generally so constructed that quite a light sound can be heard from one end of the building to the other. How was it done?

When a prisoner has earned 224 marks—possible in four weeks—among other privileges he is entitled to have in his cell a slate and pencil, and I conceived the idea that if I could get No. 20—I was No. 21—to write the alphabet on his slate with figures underneath, in this manner:

A, B, C, D, E,
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.,

we could, by tapping the wall, convey our thoughts to each other. So I looked out for an opportunity to let him know our plan, and one morning I was put to wash the floor of the landing at the time when No. 20 was confined in his cell.

Very cautiously, on wiping by his cell, I whispered to him, under the door, to write down the alphabet and corresponding figures on his slate as above, so that when evening came we might commence. Immediately I had finished supper I heard No. 20 get his slate, and I got mine. My first message to him was "Ready?" and his first reply, "Yes." I therefore began with eighteen taps, *R* being the eighteenth letter of the alphabet, *e* five, *a* one, *d* four, *y* twenty-five, which he, having his slate before him, counted and wrote down; and so, while the officer was looking direct at me and listening, he only saw me using my slate, and if he heard anything at all, it was only what seemed to him a light tapping, which might be made by writing.

Thus for nights we communicated with each other, I learning that he was a carpenter—had been in prison six times previously, was serving eighteen months imprisonment for horse stealing, his address, and many other particulars of him, until being put to work in the kitchen, he was shifted three cells away from mine, which, of course, made it impossible for us to continue our correspondence by tapping.

However, nothing daunted, I began to ponder the possibility of keeping it up in some other way. I was mpelled to do so, more because the officers seemed so confident that it was impossible than by the pleasure actually taken in the correspondence.

If a prisoner is ill, it often happens that pills are given him from a pill box exactly like those supplied by an ordinary chemist. These boxes, however, are not generally left with the prisoner—but the officer will have the pills only, except when he obliges the prisoner to swallow them in his presence—which most officers insist upon. One of these boxes, with lid complete, I found in the warder's bedroom, where I daily made the bed. It had evidently been thoughtlessly thrown aside by the ward-

er on duty the night previous. I concealed it about me and conveyed it to my cell.

That night, looking at the box, I remembered that years before my father had brought home a "toy telephone"—probably the reader has seen them—two parts exactly like pill-boxes, joined together by a long piece of thread by whispering into one end of which any one in the next room applying the other end to the ear could distinctly hear all that was said. I therefore thought it possible that if I could procure the thread I could, by some means or other, get converse with my late neighbor.

I thought and thought about it, and determined to take the thread out of my coat seams, here and there, at different times to avoid suspicion, and then ask my officer for a needle and thread to repair it. I anticipated just what happened, that more thread would be given me than I should require, and that the surplus, and that which I obtained from my coat, would suffice to connect my cell to No. 24, to which my friend had been shifted. I joined the pieces of thread and soon had my "telephone" made, which, until I could use, I concealed in my salt-box, covering it with the salt. I had yet, however, to acquaint No. 24 with my second plan, and this I found most difficult, as he was engaged in the kitchen nearly the whole of the day, and I rarely had an opportunity of seeing him, much less of speaking.

However, "patience and perseverance accomplish all things," and having every morning to dust the doors, gas-pipes, railings, etc., on the landing, at a time when most of the prisoners and officers were exercising outside, and when No. 24 was out also, I found it quite easy to enter his cell and write on his slate. "Telephone in your salt-box, thread lying along the floor; join and put to your ear exactly at 6.30 this evening." Turning this to the wall so that if a warder entered the cell he might not notice it, I discolored the thread that it might not be conspicuous when on the floor, and laying one end in No. 24 cell, I stretched it close under the wall to my own cell, No. 21.

At 6.30 o'clock that same evening I connected my end of the thread with the lid of the box, and at once began whispering. Again we were successful, and many a half-hour was beguiled in this way, and many a laugh I had at the way we were "doing" the authorities. It was necessary, however, that the thread should not lay along the floor all day, so I finished up our first evening by telling my friend to take off his box, that I might gently draw the thread to me, which, being done, I rolled it up and again concealed it in my box. I sent messages to him, too, in another manner, which I describe.

Prisoners' meals are served in two tins, one holding about three pints, and another about one pint. The latter is made to fit into the former, thus forming a lid to it, and at the same time serving to hold the bread or potatoes which could not be put into the larger tin. He informed me through our "telephone" that he always washed these tins as they were brought back to the kitchen, and I have often, when unable to lay my thread, lightly scratched a message on the bottom of my tin, which he, after reading, rubbed off.

This is quite an easy matter, as after a prisoner has finished his meal he retains possession of this until the officers return from their meals. Other criminals, too, have amused themselves in this manner—as one Easter Sunday, looking at the bottom of the tin in which my porridge had been served, I saw scratched there, evidently by some one who wanted to amuse himself: "Time is on the wing, and we shall soon be free agen." That a communication could be thus carried on may seem impossible, but what I have written actually took place.

The THING THAT WALKED BY HIS SIDE

by

Edwin Carty Ranck

THE fact that the little town of Hillsboro, New Hampshire, nestling at the foot of East Mountain, was so law-abiding that the town marshal would not have known what to do with a criminal if he caught one recommended it strongly as a choice spot for the contemplated activities of "Red" Melvin and his pal, "Lefty" Lewis. So little had ever happened in Hillsboro that Lefty and Red felt that the time was now ripe to stir things up a bit. Every one in Hillsboro was so ignorant of any sort of deception that this worthy pair of plotters, whose photographs and Bertillon measurements had long been treasured as souvenirs by the police of many cities, were certain that taking candy from the proverbial baby would be a hard job compared with the one they had in mind, which was the hold-up and robbery of the president and owner of the Hillsboro Chemical Dye Works, one of the largest dye plants in New England.

Red had a head of hair that flamed like the crest of a woodpecker, and Lefty was a "southpaw" whose morals were also left-handed. Both of them possessed an aversion to hard work that amounted almost to a mania, and the most difficult part of their present program was the unremitting daily labor in the dye works, where they had obtained employment in order to "get the lay of the land."

Already the two crooks had learned that Thaddeus Barker, the gray-haired, stern-faced president of the dye works, frequently carried large sums of money on his person. He was a silent man of many eccentricities, according to town gossip, one of these eccentricities being a disinclination to patronize banks. It was reported that he had a small fortune stored away in a safe in his study.

Mr. Barker was a widower and resided in an old-fashioned, sombre-looking house about half a mile from the dye factory. It stood high upon a hill and was approached by way of a small private road off the main thoroughfare. The house itself was completely hidden by dense pine trees and shrubbery, and the visitor who left the main road and entered the driveway had to proceed for some two hundred yards between trees whose thick foliage formed a natural roof overhead that was dense enough to keep out the sunlight on the brightest summer day. So dense, in fact, was this leafy canopy that when one forsook the bright glare of the friendly public road and stepped into the phantom lane, it was like entering a dim and silent cathedral. It was a bit of enchanted land, shadowy and aloof. No

bird notes penetrated the tree-enshrined cloister, and even the red squirrels ceased their wrangling chatter when they found themselves by chance within the magic circle. Surely beyond those green walls of silence must lie the Dark Tower before which the dauntless Childe Roland had blown the blast from the slug-horn.

Mrs. Barker had died when her only child, Howard, was five years old, and upon the lad the lonely father had settled a great fund of affection. He had been father, mother and playmate for the growing child, and there was gradually established between the two a bond of love that held them together like an invisible ligament. So sensitive was this bond that it was like a cable over which father and son communicated with one another when they were separated. It was this telepathic communication that brought Thaddeus Barker hurriedly from Boston when thirteen-year-old Howard had fallen from the roof of the barn and broken his arm.

"How did you know I was hurt, dad?" asked the wondering boy when his father arrived on the first train after the accident.

"It was just as if some one had sent me a wireless telling me to hurry home at once," replied his father fondly.

"When did you have that feeling, dad?"

"About two o'clock," replied his father after a moment's thought.

"That was just about the time I fell," said Howard, gazing wide-eyed at his father. "My arm was hurting me awful bad, and I said to myself: 'Gee, I wish dad was here!'"

This invisible cable carried many other astonishing messages from father to son and vice versa during the succeeding years. It was so uncanny at times that neither of the two ever mentioned it to outsiders. Somehow it seemed too sacred to be discussed.

These two became the closest sort of chums as the years passed. Thaddeus Barker had always been considered a stern, taciturn sort of man, but he was kindness personified where Howard was concerned, and the son lavished an adoration upon him that few parents ever receive from their children.

Although it was a sore wrench to be separated, Thaddeus sent the boy to Harvard and denied him nothing during the four years that he was in Cambridge. It was the dream of the old man's life that his son should succeed him as president of the dye works, and this dream seemed on a fair way to come true, as Howard possessed unusual business acumen and executive ability. But it was not to be. Two years after he left Harvard young Barker fell a victim to the baffling disease that became popularly known as the "flu." He fought strenuously for his life, and possessing a splendid physique, he seemingly threw off the disease and was apparently on the road to recovery when one of those fatal relapses which often follow that disease occurred.

During the boy's entire illness his father nursed him with a care that combined the skill of a trained nurse and the tenderness of a mother, erecting between the hovering specter and his sick son a barrier of love that even death appeared powerless to penetrate. But his despairing efforts were of no avail, and on the night that Howard died he called his father to his bedside.

"I feel that the end is not far off, dad," he said faintly, "but I want you to know that I shall always be with you in spirit when you need me most, just as you never failed me when I needed you. I shall always know telepathically whenever you are in danger or trouble, and if such a thing is possible I shall come to you from the world beyond."

Ever since his son's death Thaddeus Barker had lived like a recluse in the old house on the hill, a deaf old housekeeper his only companion. His shoulders drooped a bit more and his taciturnity was accentuated; otherwise he gave no outward sign of the inner grief that ate him like a cancer. He was usually the last man to leave the dye works and always walked home. Every evening at a quarter before six he might be seen strolling slowly up the private roadway that led to the cheerless house where the old housekeeper would have his dinner in readiness for him.

One evening as the old man was walking up the dim pathway he heard a rustling in the bushes at one side of the road as if some one were stealthily approaching him.

"Who's there?" he called in a quavering voice, looking around in the fast-gathering gloom.

There was no reply, nor was there any fur-

ther rustling, and old man Barker laughed nervously.

"Must have been a woodchuck or a rabbit," he muttered and continued on his way.

But if he had looked closer he might have seen a flaming head of hair that glowed in the bushes like a torch. Close to this lurid crest was a darker head. Red Melvin owned the first and Lefty Lewis the second, and both men were staring after the departing figure of Thaddeus Barker in puzzled bewilderment.

"Well," growled Red, "why did you let the old guy away again?"

"Why didn't *you* do something?" retorted the other angrily. "I was leavin' things to you."

"I—I don't know," stammered Red. "Just as he got opposite me I was goin' to jump out an' make him stick up his mitts, but somethin' queer-like come over me an' I couldn't move."

"You're a swell stick-up man, you are!" said Lefty disgustedly. "I didn't make any move at first 'cause I thought there was some one with the old gent when he started up the walk."

"That's queer," agreed Red. "I was sure, too, that some one was walkin' with him when he first turned off the main road."

"Ain't gettin' cold feet, are you?" sneered Lefty.

"No, are you?" snarled Red, thrusting a belligerent jaw almost into his pal's face.

"No," wavered Lefty uneasily, "but I don't like the looks of things around here. There's somethin' queer goin' on an'——"

"Queer or not queer, we're goin' to finish this job to-morrow night," said Red with a vicious click of his teeth. "If two husky ginks like us can't handle an old man when he's got scads of money salted away, somebody ought to give us a couple o' teethin' rings to bite on."

It was somewhat later the next evening when old man Barker left the dye works and the sun was peeping above the horizon like a blushing and flirtatious girl when the sad-faced man turned into the mysterious lane that lay brooding in the last hush of twilight. Already from the damp surrounding fields there was rising a miasmic mist that chilled one like a rain-soaked garment. This mist, rising from the ground as if at the incantations of gibbering witches, formed weird smoke-like shapes in the gathering dusk.

Lefty and Red, hiding in the undergrowth beside the private path and well out of sight of the main thoroughfare, glanced dubiously at one another and shivered violently, although it was midsummer. Both of them were frightened, but neither dared admit it. They had engineered more ticklish jobs than this during their checkered careers, but never had they been assailed by the *sort* of fears that now rode their uneasy souls.

Slowly old man Barker sauntered into view, and then the two watching hold-up men looked at one another and swore.

"Hell!" ejaculated the disgusted Red, "some one is with him again!"

"But there was no one with him when he left the dye works," whispered Lefty.

"When he got out of sight of us he must have picked up a neighbor," replied Red, straining his eyes in the fast-accumulating dusk.

There was undoubtedly some one with the president of the dye works, but the two watchers by the roadside could not make out the identity of the person beyond the fact that it was a man. They waited a moment and then——

"He's all alone now!" whispered Red stridently. "Wait until he passes and then we'll sneak up behind him and poke a gun in his ribs."

Nearer and still nearer came old man Barker. He passed the hiding-place of the thugs, and they were preparing to spring from the bushes when they drew back again, gazing with awestruck faces at one another.

"Look!" said Lefty in trembling tones. "Some one is with him again. Did—did you see any one join him?"

"No," whispered Red. "There must be a side path that we overlooked."

"It's—it's awful queer!" stammered Lefty, his eyes bulging. "Look at the old man! He ain't sayin' a word. He acts just as if he didn't know there was any one with him."

"He's a funny old bird," replied Red, trying to speak reassuringly. "Never does much talkin' at any stage of the game."

"Well, what's the lay now?" asked Lefty.

"You said you was goin' to finish this job tonight."

"An' I meant it," growled Red. "But I ain't goin' to take no chances when there's another guy with him. It wouldn't do to croak anybody. I ain't aimin' to walk to the big chair with nice little electric fixtures on it. Not me! If the old guy don't come across after a reasonable talk we might try a hot poker on him or the water cure, but no *murder* stunt. We ain't never pulled nothin' like that before, an' we ain't goin' to now."

"Then what *is* your game, boss?" asked Lefty. Red had always been the leader of their explorations in crime.

"To-morrow night," said Red, "we'll come up here earlier an' hide in the bushes near the house where we can see every inch of this dinky little road. You have your 'gat' all ready an' I'll have my blackjack handy in my mitt. If this other guy is with him I'll soak him one on the bean that'll make him hit the mat. While I'm doin' that you hold the old man at the end of your 'gat' until I'm through with the other guy. Get me?"

Lefty nodded.

"If the old man acts reasonable we'll take what he's got on him an' then walk him to the house an' make him give us the combination to the safe. If he don't act reasonable we'll try a little rough stuff on him. I tell you, Lefty, if what these rubes around here says is true, this here job will just about put you an' me on Easy street for life. But there mustn't be any slip-up to-morrow night. Understand?"

Again Lefty nodded, and then they slipped quietly away in the darkness.

The next evening found them at their posts, grimly determined that nothing should interfere with their program this time. It was one of those raw, chilly evenings with flurries of rain, the sort which so often makes a summer day in the New Hampshire hill country seem like a dismal forerunner of the long winter.

As per his instructions of the night before, Lefty had his "gat" ready for instant use, and Red carried a vicious-looking blackjack guaranteed to put a man to sleep with one gentle tap back of the ear. They were both concealed near the house in the dense undergrowth, from which vantage-point they could command a clear sweep of the private road almost to the point where it veered away from the public thoroughfare.

The weather or something was affecting Lefty's nerves, and he was so jumpy that Red cautioned him several times.

"I'll see that the old gent don't hurt you, bo," he muttered, and Lefty squirmed beneath his sarcasm.

There was a short wait, and then Lefty nudged his partner excitedly.

"Here he comes!" he whispered.

Old man Barker suddenly emerged into view and began walking up the path. He walked very slowly, as if his feet were lumps of lead. The road stretched out before the two lurking hold-up men as smooth and straight as a long tan belt. No one was with the approaching man, nor was there any possibility this time of any person joining him unless he popped up from the earth like one of Jason's men. Mr. Barker slowly drew nearer and then — —

"What—what's *that* with him?" suddenly quavered Lefty, his teeth beginning to chatter.

"There's no one with him," cried Red harshly. "There *couldn't* be!"

But Lefty was pointing down the road with a trembling finger.

"I tell you there *is*," he whispered.

The only answer from Red this time was a sudden hissing intake of breath.

Walking beside old man Barker was a tall, straight young man with a stern, set face and eyes that seemed to the watchers like twin flames of blue. He kept pace with the older man, and yet Barker did not seem aware of his presence. He still walked with lagging step, eyes fastened unseeingly upon the ground, and as he drew nearer there was no longer any question in the minds of his would-be assailants.

The president of the dye works did not know that he was being escorted to his house by a young man with the face of an avenging angel and whose unswerving blue eyes seemed to see straight through the bushes into the terrified faces of the two crooks.

Nearer and still nearer came the two figures.

"Look!" cried Red hoarsely.

Holding to one another like frightened children in the dark, the footpads stared at what they saw and turned livid with a horror, the like of which neither had ever before experienced in a lifetime of excitement.

The thing that walked by old man Barker's side looked, at the first casual glance, like a young man dressed in the ordinary habiliments that convention demanded. But, although he seemed solid enough at a distance, Lefty and Red saw as he came abreast of their hiding-place that there was nothing substantial about him. He was gray and vapory, as if made of smoke, and he did not *walk* along the road. He *glided!* In fact, as nearly as the two horror-stricken crooks could make out, he was floating in the air a few inches above the ground! As this thing passed their ambush it seemed to hover in front of them for a moment, menacing them with the most awful eyes that ever shone from an unhuman face.

As it stood there both Lefty and Red became aware of another incredible phenomenon: a shrub on the other side of the road which was *behind* the creature appeared to their dumb gaze just as distinctly as if nothing stood in the way.

They were looking straight through the thing!

"My God, it ain't human!" chattered Red.

"It's—it's—I don't know what it is!" whispered Lefty.

Then the nightmare grip of horror left them, and with incoherent, animal-like cries they dashed through the undergrowth, mad with terror. As they lumbered away like frightened horses old man Barker stopped in his walk and looked mildly around.

"Eh? What?" he said, addressing the air. "Did some one call?"

There was no response, and he looked wonderingly up and down the deserted road on which no living thing stood but himself.

"Queer!" he muttered. "I could have sworn I heard some one cry out as if in pain or fright. Must have been a woodchuck or a rabbit."

WHY WE SAY "GOD BLESS YOU!" TO SNEEZERS

A FRENCH author, Saintyves, has published a monograph entitled in English translation "Sneezing and Yawning in Magic, Ethnography and Medical Folklore." The sections devoted to sneezing are briefly reviewed in *Le Progres Medical.*

Among many primitive peoples a sneeze signified the critical moment at which an apparition became visible or a danger had passed. It was the occasion for felicitations and good wishes, just as it still is among the "civilized" whites of to-day. When one barbaric monarch sneezed the word was quickly passed along by word of mouth until all of the subjects had been informed, and the latter then made solemn wishes for His Majesty's health. At another African court the courtiers turned their backs and slapped themselves on the thigh at the royal sneeze. In a third country at the sneeze of any important personage those within earshot fell to their knees, kissed the ground and wished the sneezer all manner of good luck. The Roman Emperor Tiberius made all hands salute him whenever he sneezed, but this seems to have been a personal matter, for Pliny had never heard the like.

Among the ancient Greeks artificial sneezing, produced doubtless with a feather, was used for a variety of troubles—hiccough, crusts in the nasal passages, headache and difficult labor. It was also used for migraine in the Middle Ages and, after the introduction of tobacco, snuff was used in a variety of disorders. Sneezing powders were also in common use, and attempts were made to break up epileptic seizures by their exhibition. Certain people believed that sneezing by a sick man was of bad prognostic significance, while others took the exactly opposed view that if a sneeze could not be provoked the patient could not recover. In 1811 Double, a writer on symptomatology, believed that both prognostics could hold good, according to the case.

Catching Parrots

The parrot hunter who plunges into the jungles of the La Cruz river bottoms in Mexico and remains three months to make a catch of as many hundred birds, takes his life in his hands. He is exposed to waylaying peons, who hate Americans instinctively, he must ever be on the alert against a night surprise by wild beasts, he may catch a violent fever and perish unattended, or he may be eaten up by ormegoes, which are Mexican forest ants with a blood-thirsty record.

Three hundred parrots are worth, on an average, twelve dollars apiece, which is three thousand six hundred dollars. From that deduct the wages of half a dozen Mexican vagabonds who go along as tree climbers, the keep of five burros, the freight to New York by coast steamer and from New York to Washington by rail, and the residue goes into the pocket of the venturesome parrot hunter or the dealer who employs him.

The parrot builds no nest. The female selects a deep hollow in the highest tree trunks, and there lays two eggs. This occurs about May 1. The younger are hatched about June 18, ten days elapse before they can open their eyes and several weeks must be allowed for the young birds to outgrow their squab state and gain sufficient strength to be removed from the care of their parents.

The parrot is a wily and wise bird. It lays its eggs safely out of the reach of ordinary danger and takes good care not to betray their whereabouts. When the young birds are hatched they are fed twice a day by their elders, early in the morning and again about the close of day, and this operation usually betrays to the hunter the whereabouts of his prey.

The birds, in feeding their young, give vent to a series of contented clucks and chuckles, which is answered by the young ones, and which infallibly indicates to the parrot hunter where the nest is hidden.

No civilized white man familiar with the danger will himself undertake to climb the tree and capture the young birds. That is the work reserved for the Mexican peons who accompany him. There is no danger from the parent birds, but almost every tree is guarded by a colony of ormegoes, which penetrate any kind of clothing and viciously attack the flesh beneath it, being known to destroy large numbers of young parrots.

The suffering of the peons from the attack of the Mexican ants, in the ascent of trees in search of parrots, is sometimes pitiful. Their breasts are frequently covered with blood, and in their agony they fairly tear their clothing from their bodies and cast themselves on the ground, weeping and moaning. Oftentimes the effect is to nauseate them, so terrible is their suffering. If, as their master, one showed the slightest sympathy for their condition they would refuse to go up again, but under the pitiable condition of serfdom in Mexico these men are no better than slaves, compelled to do what they are bidden, regardless of life or limb.

It is fortunate if, when a peon is nearly devoured by ants, he is within easy reach of water in which to bathe himself and assuage his agony. As the parrots always hatch their young where water is plentiful, it rarely happens that the suffering peon cannot avail himself of nature's palliative at first hand. This experience is something that no civilized white man would endure, and which of itself deters many jungle hunters from engaging in the exciting sport of parrot hunting.

One interesting peculiarity of these ferocious forest ants is that myriads of them move in a solid column from tree to tree, carrying a leaf in an upright position at the head of the procession like a banner, and resembling in their self-conscious progress a conquering army on a march of invasion.

The finest parrot country in Mexico is

about the wooded bottoms of Tamaulipas, on the east coast. It is a wild, picturesque region of swamps, jungle and savannahs, here and there interpunctuated with a solitary hacienda, where three hundred or four hundred peons are at work, for the country, despite its savage aspect, is very fertile. Here three hundred miles south of Matamoras, the nearest American settlement, is the spot where your pet parrot probably first opened its eyes to the light of day stealing through the branches of the ebony and coma trees, amid surroundings that might to an imaginary polly suggest the first dawn of creation.

The forests in this region abound in all kinds of birds in rich plumage as well as ravenous beasts. Parrakeets are so abundant that what with the screeching and cawing of the parrots, it is something impossible to hear one's own voice. Hunters do not trouble themselves to secure them, however, as they are not worth carrying to market. There are some fine species of macaws, that nest in the Sierra Madre mountains, but can be seen almost any time winging their way over the treetops. As they never learn to articulate, they are not much sought by hunters.

There is apparently profit only in the double yellow head. This bird retails for from twelve dollars to twenty dollars, and is surpassed in popular esteem only by the species which fanciers denominate the African gray, which is sold at an average price of twenty-five dollars. The Mexican bird is green, with a colored head and shoulders. There are two kinds of Mexican parrots, both of which are abundant on the La Cruz, but which are held in far different esteem. If any one offers to sell you a green parrot with a red crown don't buy it.

The only Mexican parrot that is in general demand as a talking pet is the double yellow head, which with age develops a yellow hood that extends completely over the head and shoulders. The difference between this bird and the African gray is that the American learns to talk earlier than the bird from the dark continent, but is surpassed by the latter in intelligence, while at the same time he is an expert whistler and often learns to pipe a tune. This difference in gross is very slight, however, and in a practical sense the Mexican parrot is a popular biped and sells two to one as compared with his African rival.

To avoid the ormegoes as far as possible, and facilitate climbing, the Mexicans use ropes, which they cast from one limb to another, and by which they ascend to the hollows where the young parrots are nesting. At the first sign of danger the parent birds articulate a sharp cry of alarm, and then chuckling young fledglings as suddenly cease their noise as if an electric shock had paralyzed them. After the capture of their young the old ones fly about the camp and utter this warning cry, at which every young parrot abruptly relapses into silence. Hunters leave the old birds severely alone, as they never overcome their aversion to cage life and seldom or never learn to talk.

Strange as it may seem, a young parrot is tame as soon as he is taken from his nest, and apparently is never conscious of the loss of his liberty. He is not immediately put into a coop to prevent his escape, as might be supposed, but two hundred or three hundred birds are kept together, without any restraint whatever, by simply spreading a cane roof over them on the ground, so that they are protected from the rays of the sun, for parrots are very fond of shade.

On the Cruz river the parrot camps are not as often broken into by wild beasts as would seem probable on account of their exposure. The woods abound in game, and the brutes are not driven to desperate expedients by hunger, yet hunters must be constantly prepared for them as well as ever be on their guard against reptiles and vermin if their love of excitement and adventure tempts them too far.

In their native state the birds live on mangoes and the nuts of the ebony tree; but the hunters always carry with them a supply of corn, which is reduced to a pulpy state by means of the primitive mattata stone, and is fed to them in lieu of their native food.

The average parrot hunting expedition consists of the hunter, six Mexican peons and a troop of five or six burros, which are the chief means of transporting freight in the interior of the country. They are invaluable for this purpose as they are cheap, easily kept and capable of carrying on their backs a burden equal to their own weight.

In many parts of Mexico wagons are almost unknown. The country is rough and burros alone meet the local requirements. To secure the right kind of Mexicans is another matter. The Mexican of the lower class is a thoroughly improvident fellow. Being a chronic debtor, he enters into a voluntary condition of servitude to any one who will lend him money, and remains a peon as long as that debt continues to run.

Nearly all the haciendas in the interior are worked by these poor serfs, who, being denied all social and educational advantages, naturally become a depraved and vicious element of the country.

The number of persons at the haciendas where the parrot hunter penetrates, who are above the peons in educational respects, rarely exceeds two or three, the planter and his children, perhaps a son, who has had some slight advantages, or a son and daughter.

When peons are wanted for parrot hunting, the hunter goes to a hacienda and makes a requisition for them. If they are in debt the owner of the place does not allow them to leave the premises until the last farthing is paid down. This done, the hunter stipulates the amount of their wages. The average pay is three reals a day, which is thirty-seven cents in American money. He considers himself fortunate if he secures a gang whose gypsy instincts do not extend beyond petty larceny to robbery and assassination. The majority of peons have no more regard for property rights than a Geronimo Apache.

When the hunter has secured a sufficient number of birds he puts them into large cages of wire and cane, made by the Mexicans in leisure hours, which are then strapped upon the burros' backs. The distance to La Cruz station is forty-five miles, over rough and rugged ground, most of it primitive soil, which nothing but a patient burro and a man afoot could travel. There the steamer takes them to Tampico. Arrived at this point the birds are transferred to a coast steamer and in due course of time reach New York, to be forwarded to their destination in the interior of the United States.

Six months from the time that polly is feeding on mangoes in the dark jungles of Mexico she adorns a luxurious American household, and in something like a year expresses her opinions in good English.

ANTI-FOG MACHINE

THE Medical Supply Association of London, who supply the medical profession with X-ray and electro-medical gear, are eagerly awaiting London's next "pea-soup" fog to continue their experiments with a "fog-dispelling" machine.

The "fog-dispeller" is not a new invention, but is an ordinary static electrical machine used for high tension treatments by doctors. The model used for the experiments is a substantial glass cabinet in which revolve sixteen large glass plates side by side. In front of the cabinet are two adjustable brass balls.

The glass plates are revolved at high speed with the aid of a small one-horsepower motor, and, if the brass balls are close enough together a current of 200,000 volts is discharged between them like a streak of forked lightning.

By drawing the balls apart the current is unable to burn its way through the air gap between them, and is forced to discharge into the atmosphere.

The effect of so electrically charging the air is to attract particles of dirt and dust to the machine. The association's showroom has been cleared of smoke in a few minutes by this means.

In an experiment, when the fog was at its thickest, a number of bright balls and sheets of metal were hung around the machine. The doors of the showroom were opened, and the current switched on. In fifteen minutes the hanging particles were black with fog particles; and electric bulbs and furniture in the showroom were smothered with dirt. At the same time the fog outside the building began to clear!

"Whether it was mere coincidence or not we are scarcely ready to say," said a demonstrator to a *London Daily News* representative.

The Woman in the Case

By J. M. SCANLAND

"SIGNORA MORONTO, the coffee is ready!" exclaimed Constanzia, the servant, as she rapped at the door to awaken her mistress. She then took the pass-key from the door, entered, put the tray upon the little table at the head of the bed, and again exclaimed: "Signora, the coffee!" Not receiving an answer, the servant turned toward the bed and was about to repeat the exclamation when she was startled by the ghastly appearance of the signora's face. The eyes were glaring and her features were drawn and pallid. Constanzia ran from the room screaming. At the head of the stairs she called to her husband, Conio.

"Are there robbers in the house, that you scream so loudly?" asked Conio.

"The signora has been murdered! Come quick!"

Conio ran up the stairs and breathlessly entered the room. His wife remained at the door, with her hands to her face, as if to shut out from her vision the horrid sight.

Conio looked at the corpse, placed his kerchief to his eyes, turned and went out, closing the door.

The servants went downstairs.

"Let no one come. I will go after the police. It was robbers, no doubt!" said Conio to his wife.

Detectives Sonati and Lees examined the corpse. They found that there was a deep knife wound in the left breast. The bureau drawers had been ransacked and the old camphor-wood box in the corner had been opened and papers were strewn upon the floor.

"How many people live in this house?" asked Detective Sonati.

"Only us three—the Signora Moronto, Sonio there and myself. He is my husband!" answered Constanzia.

"Did she keep much money here?" continued Sonati, examining the papers.

"Large sums at times. All her fortune was in the bank!"

The detectives then examined the windows. They were latched on the inside, and the rear door was bolted, also on the inside.

"The entrance was through that door!" whispered Lees to Sonati.

"Looks that way!" replied his assistant.

"You said that when you came in you saw the corpse on the bed?" asked Lees.

"Yes, signor officer," replied the servant woman.

"She was dead?"

"It is just as I told you already. My mistress was dead!"

The officer was silent a few minutes. He looked at the surroundings and at the corpse. The servants looked at each other and then at the officers. Then suddenly Lees asked the woman:

"Did the signora open the door when you came with the coffee?"

"How strangely you talk, signor officer! How could she when she was dead, as I have just told you!"

"Then, how did you get into her room!" quickly asked the officer.

"I have a pass-key. It is in the door there!" replied the woman with frankness.

The detectives exchanged glances.

"No one else has a key?" asked Lees. At the moment he looked behind the small lamp on the table and saw a key.

"No one, senor officer!"

"Are you certain?" said Lees as he held the key before the woman.

"That is the signora's key. She always locked the door when she went to bed and put the key on the table, so that I could come in without having her get out of bed to unlock the door!"

The officer shrugged his shoulders and put the key in his pocket.

The detectives then searched the kitchen and the bedroom of the servants. They again went upstairs, and in walking along the corridor to the opposite end of the building Lees saw a spot of blood on the floor. They found another blood mark a few feet beyond, and then they came to a stairway that led to an attic. Blood marks were seen on the two first steps, and the officers followed the clues to a door, which they entered. In the attic were old boxes and cast-away articles. While examining these Detective Sonati saw something white behind the door. Taking it to the light, he found that it was a waiter's jacket, splotched with blood marks in front. He handed it to Lees. The detective smiled and continued his search. "This may be another clue!" exclaimed Lees as he began to unwrap a newspaper he had picked up in the corner. In the paper was a pair of canvas shoes, the soles bloodstained.

The officers returned to the death room, where the two servants were weeping over the corpse.

"Who does this belong to?" asked Sonati, holding the bloodstained jacket before the eyes of Conio.

"It—is mine, signor! Did you take it from the hook in the kitchen?"

"No! But in the garret where you put it!" exclaimed the officer, looking Sonio in the eyes.

"I know nothing of what you say, signor officer.

"Are these your shoes?" quickly asked Lees, as he held the articles before the confused Conio.

"I will not deny that either. But how came they to have blood upon them and my jacket, too?"

"You admit that these shoes and this jacket belong to you?" asked Lees.

"I do. But I know nothing more, and do not understand what you are trying to do," replied the man in scarcely audible tones and trembling.

"What did you do with the knife?" asked Lees.

"I have no knife! Do you accuse me of that horrible murder of my mistress!" shrieked Conio.

"Under the circumstances we are compelled to arrest you on suspicion," said Sonati coldly.

As the officers were starting away with Conio his wife fell screaming and fainting. In a few moments she revived, and they left her alone with the corpse.

At the police station Conio was put under the third degree, but he told the same story; that is, he did not tell anything now and only expressed his surprise at the apparent circumstantial evidence against himself. Finally he recollected that a few months ago one "Sicilian Joe" had been employed there for a few weeks, and having been caught stealing money out of the bureau drawer Signora Moronto discharged him.

"He was about 25 years of age, had thick black hair, flat nose, eyes like a cat, had no whiskers, and his face looked like he was mad all the time," said the prisoner by way of a description of the fellow. "That is all the name he gave and he said he lived on Telegraph Hill."

"Continue on the case!" said Chief Crowley to the officers. Conio was taken to his cell.

"I think we have the right man, and there may be an accessory!" said Lees to Sonati as they stood on the corner opposite the "Pizanelli Opera House."

"It may be a case of revenge, or a plot to remove the old woman and get her property. But no heirs have appeared, and usually they show up even before the funeral," replied Sonati. "Let's cross over. Italians are great talkers!"

The officers entered the so-called opera house and took seats at one of the round tables, at which wine was served to the auditors. In a moment they were "spotted" by the proprietress, who made it a point to welcome the most promising visitors; that is, those who looked as if they did not "count their money twice" before spending it.

"Good evening, signors! My name is Lucrezia Pizanelli, manager of this Teatro. You are strangers here, and it is our custom to welcome every one."

"Join us in a glass?" asked Lees, motioning to a waiter.

The woman nodded and remained chatting a while.

"Now I must sing," she said as she arose.

"I hope you will enjoy the opera, if not my singing. It is 'Heart Bowed Down,' my vorite."

While the middle-aged faded star was struggling with this operatic gem as if her heart would really break, the detectives were scanning the faces of the auditors. Lees pretended to be talking to Sonati, who was listening to two of his countrymen at a nearby table.

"The signora sings like she is in trouble," said one of the men, laughing.

"Perhaps it is because the Sicilian is flirting too much with her rival, Signorina Camilla!" suggested the other with a wink as emphasis.

"Since she supports him, he has no right to flirt with other women."

"Ah, she has finished, and I am relieved. I hope she won't come to this table; her visits are too frequent."

"It is my treat this time. I saw you applauding me, and I am very thankful!" said the star as she returned to the table where the detectives sat.

"No, we will do the honors," said Lees, motioning to a waiter.

Sonati noticed the keen eye of the star fixed on a couple at a distant table. He raised his glass and looked over the top at Lees. That officer looked around and his eyes rested upon the couple indicated.

"Who is that young lady at the fourth table?" asked Sonati.

"Oh, that is Signorina Camilla, my comic singer. That is, she thinks she can sing," replied the star with a bit of irony and jealousy, as she thrust a glance at the couple. "I hope I can get some one better in a few days."

"Is that man with her your tragedian?"

"Oh, my, no. He was my stage manager until last week. I discharged him, as he is a Sicilian and knows nothing of real Italian art. Mr. Catorce, I believe, is in love with Signorina Camilla," concluded the star with a tinge of irony.

The detectives exchanged glances, and Lees ordered more wine.

"He is not at work here now?" asked Sonati.

"Oh, no! But he comes every night to see his inamorata. He seems to have a great deal of money."

As Sonati looked across at the couple he met the gaze of the Sicilian, who immediately lowered his eyes.

"Perhaps he has rich relatives?" said Lees, laughing.

"Then I should be sorry for them. Joe has a bad reputation, which I did not know until a short time ago," said the signora with a suggestive look and emphasis on the last few words. "Excuse me; it is my time to sing again." She arose, threw a look of scorn upon her former lover and her rival, Signorina Camilla.

"Sicilian Joe is spending money very freely on his new sweetheart," said one of the men near the officers in Italian, resuming their criticism.

"Yes, and the colony is talking about this affair and—something else," replied his friend.

"The Pizanelli woman gives her former lover a bad name," said Sonati to Lees as they stopped at the corner.

"Jealousy and revenge perhaps. That's the way with women," replied Lees.

"But that guy is 'Sicilian Joe,' and the description given by the prisoner fits him."

"True! We may as well take him down to headquarters."

"I think if we make a bold bluff he will throw up his hands. He suspects us, and he may suspect the Pizanelli woman. She may know something, or why that broad hint?" suggested Sonati. "She may have suspected that we are officers?"

"Sometimes a jealous woman will make such insinuations to get a man into trouble, though knowing that they are false."

"We may as well trail him to his room, search it, and then take him down on suspicion," suggested the Italian officer.

The Sicilian now left the room.

In a few minutes he stood at the foot of the stairs. He looked in each direction as one who fears arrest, and then started homeward. Two forms trailed along in the shadows, and as he started to his room the officers seized him.

"We will accompany you, Joe," said Detective Sonati.

"You are mistaken in your man, boss."

"Of course we are always mistaken, but we will see about that after you have ex-

plained about that murder in the Moronto house."

Joe was taken to his room, where the officers found a roll of small bills, one of which was stained with finger-marks which were afterward proven to be Joe's. A stiletto was also found, and though it had been washed traces of fresh blood were discovered after a microscopical examination.

Given the third degree at the police station, Sicilian Joe admitted that he committed the murder. He said that he had been employed at the house and, becoming familiar with the surroundings, decided upon robbing the woman, as he had heard that she had a great deal of money hidden in her room.

"I climbed the garden fence," he said, "then went to the kitchen and took from the nail the pass-key to her room, which was used by Constanzia. Next I took the jacket and shoes of Conio. I went to the garret, put on the shoes and jacket and left my coat and shoes in their place; then I opened her door with the key and——" The Sicilian shaded his eyes with his hands, as if to shut out the vison of the corpse, and continued: "She screamed and I struck her. I then locked the door, went to the garret, put on my things and left Conio there. I put the key on the nail where I got it from and went out through the garden, the way I came."

Of course the confession convicted him, and the two detectives were congratulated for the good work they had done.

OLD MINE FIRE UNDER CONTROL

THE Summit Hill fire, the king of all mine fires, is still burning, but it is well under control, according to a recent announcement by the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company on whose property flames have been eating up millions of tons of anthracite coal for the last 62 years. While this one has been brought under control another mine fire, which has been burning 19 years near Mount Carmel, Pa., in the heart of the lower anthracite field, is still trying to spread. A third fire, which has been raging for three years, in the Red Ash vein of the Red Ash Coal Co. made it necessary to close the old Giant's Despair road known to many automobilists because of the hill climbing contests that have been held upon it.

The Summit Hill fire in the Panther Creek Valley between Lansford and Coaldale, was discovered in February, 1869, in an abandoned gangway. The hard coal dips from 20 degrees to about 70 degrees and is about fifty feet thick. The area involved is about one mile long by 1,500 feet wide. How many millions of tons of coal have been consumed has never been accurately ascertained, but it has cost the company more than $3,000,000 to fight the long-burning fire.

In the early sixties an open cut was made in the involved area, which seemed to isolate the flames for many years, but eventually the fire traveled past this cut into the coal areas beyond. Many efforts were made to check the flames, but to no avail, until about 1910, when a concrete and clay barrier about twelve feet thick, 170 feet deep and 700 feet long, was built. The fire traveled so rapidly that it pressed closely upon the location of the new barrier before the work was completed and the heat became so intense that men could work only in twenty-minute relays. The barrier eventually checked the progress of the fire.

In order to insure against a further spread the coal company has been stripping the overburden from the coal west of the barrier. This operation has been in progress nine years, and when completed the company officials hope the fire will be certain to be under control. The cost of the stripping operation, involving the removal of 3,500,000 cubic yards of material, it is estimated, will approximate $2,700,000. It is not known to the present generation of mining men how the fire started.

The nineteen-year-old fire is in the abandoned workings of the Sioux mine of the Lehigh Valley Company near Mount Carmel. It originated where hot ashes were dumped into a mine breach and ignited the coal. All effort to subdue the flames has proved unsuccessful.

The PRESENCE of ROYALTY

by Jack Bechdolt

CHAPTER ONE

A MAN fitted a key in the door, entered the apartment and switched on the electric lights. He surveyed the place with an appraising eye and found it excellent.

It was the type of apartment the modern landlord always classes as either a "studio" or "chambers." Situated on the thirteenth floor of a tall, modern building, it commanded a view across the housetops toward that aurora glow where Broadway's many incandescents colored the night air with glory. All that outer side of it was deep windows, tastefully curtained in blue silk hangings.

This big living-room was paved with a rug of rich wine-red. The walls were a warm French gray in tint. A picture here, a rare vase there repeated the blue of the silk hangings. There were some comfortable bookcases, built high enough so that a man need never stoop to read the titles, a generously big table desk of carved wood, a small grand piano.

On the hearth a coal fire winked cozily at this quiet dinner hour of a boisterous late winter evening. The shaded lights that sprang up at the turn of the switch shed a quiet richness.

But the thing which seemed to lend special distinction to the room, making it different and richer than all other rooms, shedding a sort of benediction over everything, was the photographic portrait of a very beautiful woman. It was a rather large portrait in a silver frame, placed under the light on the big desk, and when the lights flashed up it instantly became the centre of the picture, the heart of the home.

The man went at once to this picture, took it in both hands and examined it with reverent admiration.

The woman of the framed photograph was so beautiful that to look at her was a perpetual surprise. It was not alone a matter of flawless features, such common things as eyes, nose, mouth, chin, brow and hair, though the aspect and proportion of these left nothing for the critical to suggest; there was more to her beauty than that. Something intangible but very compelling of admiration looked from the wide, dark eyes; something of her soul which the camera had caught. Sympathy, dignity, charm were in the smile fixed there by the work of light on chemically treated paper. The poise of the head on the perfect, slender neck and the jointure of neck to perfect shoulders was regal. The proudest queen would pray to look like that, for the entire aspect of the photograph was queenly. It ruled the room and everything in it. It gave it distinc-

tion by its presence—the presence of royalty, nothing less.

The man who held the photograph realized this with a gasp of surprise and a lingering, worshipping look.

He was a tall, thin, distinguished-looking man who had thrown a fashionable light overcoat over dinner dress. He had removed his hat in the presence of the regal photograph, and the light shone on black hair frosted with silver. There was a fleeting suggestion of whimsicality in his smile and deviltry and daring in his dark eyes.

He seated himself at the desk and fell into a reverie of admiration for the picture propped up before him.

The boisterous wind outside made queer noises in the steel network of a fire-escape balcony. It pounced around angles of the tall building and swooped roaring into the black void beneath the windows.

A noise, real or fancied, or some unusual sight caught in the reflection of a mirror, narrowed the man's eyes suddenly. He rose, strolled uncertainly about the room, seemed to recollect his errand there, stepped into the room adjoining, emerged again with a pair of gloves, took up his hat and stick and extinguished the lights again. The outer door of the apartment opened and closed.

For the next ten minutes the room was undisturbed. The fire glowed dimly in the grate. The wind howled outside the building.

The glass of one of the windows cracked sharply and a sliver or two tinkled against the hardwood floor. A hand, dimly seen, was thrust through the opening, the window opened and the puff of wind from outside wafted in something more substantial than air.

A muffled figure moved cautiously toward the big table desk, and a pocket flashlamp flickered to guide its steps. For several minutes the quiet, cautious investigation went on undisturbed. Then all the electric lights flashed up.

The man in dinner clothes stood by the light switch, and one hand held a pistol that threatened the intruder. He had not left the room, only feigned to do so, and waited in the shadows.

The intruder paused in mid-gesture, paralyzed by the flood of light.

At his second glance the man's pistol wavered.

The intruder was a woman!

A woman wrapped in a man's heavy coat, wearing a man's cap, but unmistakably a woman.

She was a woman of probably thirty years or more and unlovely. The hands, which were without gloves, were red with exposure and coarsened. Her face had a sickish pallor and looked pinched and drawn. The eyes were ringed with dark circles of fatigue. Wisps of stringy black hair escaped from under the cap and hung about her face.

The man who had trapped her recovered from his surprise with a little difficulty. He managed to ask finally, in a purposely light, casual way:

"Making rather free with other people's homes and property, aren't you?"

The woman seemed incapable of speaking. The muscles of her face contracted slightly, that was all. It was as if what voice she owned had been frightened away beyond call. Her captor spoke again, chidingly:

"Breaking and entering! That's serious, you know." He circled her warily and examined the broken window. "Almost a professional job," he mused. "Peace of chewing-gum stuck to the broken glass so it wouldn't fall inside. How'd you break it, with a rock?"

No answer.

He looked further and picked up an ordinary kitchen knife.

"With the handle of this, eh? Clumsy, very clumsy! You work in a kitchen perhaps—in the kitchen of the café in the basement of this building? Is that it?"

Still no answer from the woman, but her eyes told him he had guessed right.

He returned to the table, adding seriously:

"You know what a judge can hand you for breaking and entering!"

Her reddened, coarsened hand rose involuntarily toward her lips and fumbled there in an excess of terror.

"Well," said the host, "let's sit down and talk it over, but—— Excuse me, you might have a gun about you." He patted the pockets of the man's coat which wrapped her and found nothing. "Do sit down," he invited, seating himself by the table.

She spoke at last in a hoarse, flat, despairing voice:

"You got me. Go on and call a cop."

"Oh! Why hurry? Perhaps you have some explanation——"

"Explanation! I'm here, ain't I? You saw how I got in. Well, call your cop. Go on, call 'em all. Call a cop! Call a cop——"

He interrupted this hoarse, hysterical outburst.

"Please sit down. I want to know why you did this. Won't you tell me?"

"Call your cop! Call 'em. I don't give a damn!"

"But, my dear lady, suppose I don't give a damn, either? Suppose I don't care about calling the police? Very likely you had some desperate reason to break in here. Now, didn't you? It's an amateurish job, you know! A professional with any pride would walk in the front door and use skeleton keys in a place like this. A fire-escape! Brrr! I'll bet it was cold out there!"

She stood sullenly, refusing to smile, refusing by the twitch of one muscle to acknowledge the kindly humor of his tone.

"I won't say a damn word," she burst out. "You can send me to jail for life, but I won't tell you!"

He looked her over shrewdly.

"Well," he shrugged, "if you prefer it that way!" He reached for the telephone convenient on the desk and placed the receiver at his ear.

Her hand snatched the instrument away savagely.

"Wait!" she gasped. "For God's sake, listen to me. Don't, please don't till you've heard me through."

Her hands were picking at his clothing with a pitiful flutter. "Listen!" she implored. "Only listen a minute. Just a minute. Let me talk to you just a minute! Oh, please, please, mister, if you'll just listen to me!"

He pushed the telephone aside. "All right. I hoped you'd think better of it. My name is Harper Kane. Do you want to tell me yours?"

"It doesn't matter. It's Owens, if you've got to know—Mrs. Nellie Owens. Please, for the love of mercy, Mr. Kane, let me tell you how I came to do this thing."

"Then do sit down!" She was standing before him, her coarse red hands clasped in entreaty, distressingly unbeautiful in her grief. He took her by the shoulders and forced her into a chair gently.

"I don't care what you do to me," Nellie Owens went on rapidly. "I broke the law, and you can do what you like with me. I had to have money—a lot of money. I had to have"—she gasped over the enormity of the sum—"a hundred dollars, right away!" Her eyes glanced over the room and the man before her. "I don't suppose you ever worried about a thing like that! You, with your money and all these swell things!"

"Perhaps I have," the man called Kane answered.

"My husband's sick," Nellie Owens went on. "He'll die if something isn't done quick. He used to be a waiter and earn big money with tips and everything. But he got sick. You know—lungs. The doctor said he ought to go out West. What a chance with our money all gone for medicine and me earning twelve a week washing dishes downstairs in the café! Then the doctor told us about a place in the Adirondacks where Tom could live in a little shack outdoors and maybe get well, but it would cost a hundred for his expenses.

"'You certainly can send him there,' he said. 'Anybody can raise a hundred dollars.'" She laughed harshly. "That was funny, but he didn't know it! Then he said if I didn't send Tom up there he'd die in three months and I'd be just as good as his murderer."

"Nice tactful doctor!" Kane commented.

"I'd like to know how I could get that money without stealing it!" she burst out. "I couldn't even graft it, the way some women could. I haven't got the looks for that. It made me so kind of wild, thinking of Tom dying and all you rich guys living up above me that wouldn't miss the money, that I came up the fire-escape after it got dark. I'd just as lief murder somebody if I could get that money!"

Kane nodded understandingly.

"I can guess how you feel about that. But robbery or murder isn't a good way to get the money. You're too new at that game. Suppose you go back down the fire-escape now—I'll just forget all about your breaking in—

and see if you can't think up some better way."

"What way?"

"My dear Mrs. Owens, I don't know! If I knew a plan I'd let you have it. I'm doing the best I can, offering to let you go free, giving you another chance."

"Chance! Chance for what? To go out and try to rob somebody else. That's the only way I know. I'll do it, too! If I knew a way I'd murder you right now for a hundred dollars!"

"That's poor gratitude."

"Gratitude! What do I care about gratitude! Tom's dying and I love him. Yes, I do! I love him just as much as you love that woman."

"What woman?" Kane exclaimed.

"That one there, in the picture. I seen you making love to her picture. A man don't look at a woman's photograph like that unless he's crazy about her."

Kane's eyes turned to the photograph of the regal beauty. His look softened in instinctive tribute to her. "Perhaps you're right," he admitted.

"Suppose it was her needed a hundred dollars? Suppose she was dying for lack of it?"

"Ha! Do you know who that is? That's Patricia Neil. Her father left her forty million dollars."

"She ain't a bit different than me—or Tom! If she was broke and sick she'd die for wanting a hundred dollars," Nellie Owens argued hotly. "Look at her! Look at her gentle face! If she was in this room she'd give me the money. Can you sit there with her looking on and refuse?"

Kane started.

"You suggest I give you a hundred in addition to overlooking the fact you broke my window and came to rob me? Well, of all the nerve!"

"If you really love her you will. You'll help me. For her sake, Mr. Kane! Look at her again. You don't dare turn me down!"

Kane studied the wonderful photograph several moments. There was something of the soul of the woman even more beautiful than her flesh which the camera had caught and passed on to him. It seemed to speak to him.

"Damn it!" he burst out suddenly, "I don't believe I can turn you down." He added, "If I happen to have a hundred dollars handy."

He rose and began to search about the room. He located a little strong box built in the wall and opened it rather clumsily. There was nothing in it. He searched in the bedroom adjoining without better luck. Finally he opened the drawer of the table at which they sat. There was a jeweler's case in that, and he opened it, finding a wonderful necklace of pearls, but no money.

Kane hesitated then. He glanced again at the photograph of Patricia Neil. It seemed to decide him. He took a billfold from his inner pocket.

"I do happen to have just a hundred," he said. "That cleans me out of ready money. Take it. I hope it does you more good than it would do me. Now get out, the way you came, please."

Nellie Owens had watched Kane's search of the room with a breathless alternation of hope and despair. It was plain she dared not believe fate would relent so far as to toss a hundred dollars in her lap. When the thing actually happened, when Kane took the single hundred-dollar bill from his pocket and put it in her hands, she sat for a moment stupefied.

Then she sprang to her feet, and her hands tucked the bill in some safe hiding-place in the bosom of her dress. She backed toward the window, watching him warily, much as if she expected he would spring at any moment and rob her of his bounty.

There was in her pose and manner the look of some small, weak animal snatching a bone from under the nose of a powerful one—a look rather ridiculous and at the same time pathetic.

She reached the window, tore it open and slammed it behind her. She was gone in the blustery night.

She had not uttered one word or given one glance of thanks.

Kane stared at the window through which she had gone. He laughed finally, without much mirth.

"Lovely manners she's got," he said bitterly.

He turned accusingly on the photograph of Patricia Neil. "You did that!" he declared. "You cost me a hundred dollars. A hundred dollars in these days of slim pickings! You!"

But he lingered to examine the picture with softened glance. When he set it down his hand was shaking.

"Damn it," he cried irritably, "I'm getting sentimental. And I never mixed sentiment with business before. But, God! what a woman! I believe I'd do anything for a woman like that—anything!"

The table drawer was still drawn. He picked up the jeweler's case and, opening it, glanced at the pearls appraisingly. He snapped the cover and dropped the case into his coat pocket. He glanced around the room, shook his head and retreated toward the outer door.

The photograph that moved him so was facing him. The pictured eyes seemed to follow him. He might have fancied that their expression changed, that they were accusing or reproachful. At least he went back to the table and deliberately faced the picture about so that he could not see Patricia Neil as he retreated to the door, extinguished the lights and left the apartment.

About an hour later the real Harper Kane, who was a rather fleshy, pasty-faced man of forty and resembled not at all the visitor who had assumed his name, returned to his apartment. A very few minutes later he was telephoning breathlessly for the police to report that his rooms had been entered and that a pearl necklace worth many thousands of dollars was stolen.

CHAPTER TWO

A LITTLE after midnight of this same blustery day the real Harper Kane sat in his apartment and stared at the dead coals in the grate. His pasty, fleshy face was troubled and his bright, little black eyes glanced about uneasily.

There came a gentle knock at his door, and gentle though it was, it appeared to cause him some trepidation. After it had been repeated more insistently he went to the door reluctantly and opened it with a show of bluster.

"What is it?" he asked truculently.

The tall man in dinner dress who had given a hundred dollars to Nellie Owens confronted him.

"I want to see you a minute, Mr. Kane."

"Can't see anybody!"

"Oh, yes you can! It's about Patricia Neil's pearls."

"Are you from the police headquarters?"

"Not exactly, but——"

"Well, what the devil do you mean not having yourself announced? Coming up here this way, bursting in?"

The other smiled gently.

"I thought you might prefer it that way. I came, in fact, to return the pearls. Shall I come in?"

He was already in as he spoke and closing the door behind him. Harper Kane, who was breathing noisily, backed slowly toward the centre of the room. The man noted this and approved.

"That's it. Let's sit down and talk it over. Take that chair behind the desk. I'll take this." He seated himself and reached across the flat-topped table desk to the telephone which stood near Kane. He moved the telephone close to himself. "Now," he said meaningly, displaying his pistol, "you see I'm armed. In a tenth of the time you can grab for this telephone I can put a neat, round hole right through your precious insides. So don't try to start anything."

"Who are you?" Kane whispered huskily, pasty now even to his full lips, usually so red.

"You can call me Smith," said his visitor. "What is of more interest to you is that I'm the man who stole the pearls. I've come to return them for the reward."

"Reward! There isn't any reward."

"Oh, yes, there's a reward. A reward of one hundred dollars. You will pay it."

"A hundred dollars," Kane sneered. "Try to get it."

"Yes. That's what I came for. To get it."

The manner of Smith—and Smith was no nearer his right name than Kane—became sterner. He pointed an accusing finger at Harper Kane.

"You are going to pay me one hundred

dollars reward for returning these pearls," he said. "I'm particular about the amount because it represents my actual expenses in stealing the necklace. Produce the money, please."

Kane pretended a scornful laugh.

"Try to get it!" he jeered again. "If I had a hundred dollars I wouldn't give it to a crook, and as it happens I haven't a hundred."

"Yes you have," Smith said. "You have most of the change for three thousand about you. It must be about you. It isn't in the room. I know that. Three thousand, and you're going to hand me a hundred of it."

"Three thousand!" Kane's lips repeated the sum in surprise. Then he jeered: "You're sure it wasn't three thousand and one dollars?"

"No. Three thousand, or nearly all of it. You can't have spent much of it since Tuesday. You only got it Tuesday evening."

Kane's puffy lips opened and remained open. His mind, busy elsewhere, forgot to close them. He said finally:

"What in thunder are you getting at?"

"I'm getting at just this," Smith said impressively. "You have been playing a very smooth little confidence game, Kane, but you've been found out. Being found out is going to cost you that hundred I mentioned. I'll tell you what you've been doing, since you don't seem to remember very well. Listen.

"Patricia Neil is a very beautiful, very innocent, trusting girl. Her father brought her up close at home. What she knows about the world you could write on a pin head and leave room for the Lord's prayer beside; especially what she knows about the part of the world to which you and I belong.

"But her father died and he left a huge fortune to his daughter, including a famous string of pearls. That daughter looked like easy prey to a man like you. It seemed simple and safe to win the girl's affection, marry her and do what you liked with her money. Your only trouble was, Kane, that you ran short of funds, and your creditors began to make trouble. You had to have a few thousand at once to keep them satisfied. The girl's string of pearls tempted you, didn't they?"

A little color had returned to Kane's cheeks.

"You're talking silly rot—utter rot," he said scornfully.

"Am I? Let's see. You wouldn't steal anything. Not you! That involves a risk. But it seemed quite safe on an evening last week to help the girl adjust that big rope of pearls when she was dressed for the opera, and pretend to break the clasp. And it sounded very gentlemanly and magnanimous to offer—yes, to insist—that you take them to the jeweler and pay for repairing the clasp out of your own pocket. And the silly girl trusted you!"

Smith warmed to his story. The accusing finger stabbed at Kane. His dark eyes shone wickedly upon the guilty, pasty face.

"Safe—and simple, too—to have the pearls matched with paste. A hundred dollars or perhaps two hundred paid for that. A clever match, too! They do those things wonderfully well. Then you pawned the originals for the three thousand you needed. Of course, when you won the girl, and got hold of her money, you'd replace the substitute necklace with the real thing. Naturally! So much safer!

"Well, Kane, do I get that hundred dollars' reward for my honesty, or——"

Kane burst out:

"Look here! You'll keep your mouth shut if I pay that? You'll give me your promise—your word of honor?"

"Better than my word of honor; I'll return the paste necklace. After all, what can I prove without that?"

Kane fumbled hastily in an inner pocket. He brought out a bill fold and found a one-hundred-dollar banknote. He started to extend it toward Smith, then hesitated.

"Give me the pearls first!"

Smith produced the jewel case, snapped open its cover to display the necklace and offered it to him, being careful to grasp the banknote in exchange.

The pasty-faced adventurer settled back in his chair with a sharp sigh of relief. His spirits rose. The sneer grew on his lips.

"You cheap crook!" he panted.

Smith received the slur with equanimity. He was busy replacing the hundred dollars in his billfold, glancing reminiscently at the window Nellie Owens had broken as he did so.

"A cheap crook, am I?" he repeated with a smile. "I managed to call the turn on you, Kane. How do you suppose I found out all that, being such a cheap crook?"

Kane gasped and his little black eyes rounded with terror. "Good God! Somebody else knows! Somebody told you!"

Smith chuckled.

"When you call me a cheap crook, Kane, you touch a tender spot—an exposed nerve. You challenge my pride in my profession. I must prove to you I'm not so cheap as you think. I've been watching Patricia Neil and her necklace ever since I first read about the pearls in a Sunday newspaper. I meant to steal the pearls for myself. Among other people I cultivated a woman who was a friend of the lady's maid. That's how I heard about the broken clasp and your having the necklace. Incidentally I heard a good deal about your courtship of the girl. To-night I came here to steal the pearls, and found among your things enough threats from your creditors to show just how you stand financially. Also I found the pearls, and when I took them to a broker I found just what sort of pearls your substitute necklace is made of. And finally, the clinching proof, in the lining of that jewel case there you had slipped the pawnticket for the originals."

"The ticket!"

Kane opened the jewel case, threw out the paste necklace and ripped out the silk lining it had lain on. His thick fingers dropped the box when he learned the truth.

He leaned across the table as if he were about to assault Smith. So impetuous was the movement that Smith checked it with a gesture of his pistol.

"The pawnticket!" Kane chattered. "Hang you, give me back that pawnticket."

"I can't give it back."

"Look here; give me that ticket. Say, Smith! I'm a reasonable man! I'm a business man myself. You've got that ticket. You know you have it! Well, then, what's your price? You've got the drop on me. I admit I've got to have it. Name a price. Let's do business. Smith, I want that ticket!"

Smith shook his head.

"I tell you, my dear chap, I haven't your pawnticket."

Kane's terror mounted.

"Come on!" he implored. "Any reasonable figure! I'm a business man, I tell you."

But Smith rose with a shake of the head.

"No, Kane. Sorry. We can't do business. The fact is"—he hesitated, enjoying every second of his triumph—"the fact is, Kane, I mailed the ticket to Patricia Neil to-night, along with a brief account of your little scheme. It will cost her three thousand to get back her pearls, but that is a cheap price for getting rid of you. And if you hurry, old chap, you ought to be able to get out of town before this scandal breaks."

Kane sat down hard in his chair. As the seconds went by his bulk seemed to diminish as though he were a balloon and Smith had stuck a pin in him. The round, pasty cheeks sank into loose folds. The puffy lips gaped. Altogether he made a poor, spiritless picture of defeat.

Smith looked him over thoughtfully, shrugged disgust, and turned toward the door. But he came back, drawn irresistibly by the protograph of Patricia Neil. He picked up the framed picture.

"You deserve better company than this!" he exclaimed, addressing the portrait.

Safely in the hall of the building, Kane's door closed behind him, the man of various names stopped once more to examine the picture with a reverent eagerness. And the photographic likeness smiled up at him with the tender, regal dignity of a princess and a woman in one. The picture laid its spell on him again.

"You made me do it!" he exclaimed. "Sentiment and business, I never mixed them before. And you made me do it. What a woman! Damned if I don't believe I could stand the utter boredom of earning an honest living for the sake of a woman like that."

Foster, The Medium

WHEN Foster was giving sittings on Girard street at $5 a sit, he was visited by a friend of mine, a man of intellect and common sense, and yet when he came away he was in a completely dazed condition of mind, not knowing what to think about what he had witnessed. Let me relate one thing that amazed him. He was ushered into a small reception room and told to write his name on a piece of paper, and with his own hand seal it in an envelope. He sat down before the only table in the room and wrote his name—we will assume it to be John Smith—as directed, taking care to so conceal the writing that it could not be seen from above or from any other direction. He placed it in an envelope, sealed it, and held it in one hand. The attendant then withdrew. In a few moments Foster entered and eyed his visitor with a piercing glance, as though reading his innermost thoughts. Suddenly extending his right hand he ejaculated: "How are you, Mr. Jack Smth?"

The visitor started back in surprise, as he was certain Foster had never seen him before. "How do you know my name?" he wonderingly inquired. In deep tones Foster replied: "It is written in my blood." With that he bared his left arm to the elbow, and, seizing the still sealed envelope from Mr. Smith's hand, crumbled it vigorously over the under and tender part of his arm. Over that member spread a glow through which bright crimson lines appeared, and in a few moments emblazoned on the arm in fiery letters was the name of "John Smith." The amazed visitor, at Foster's invitation, tried to wash the letters out with water, but the more he rubbed the brighter they became, until he was convinced —which was the fact—that the letters were beneath the skin and were caused by the man's own blood. Wonderful! you say, and that is what I said when I first heard of it. But I didn't believe it was supernatural, for the very simple reason that if disembodied spirits are roaming around us they have certainly something better to do than to be writing names on men's arms in order to enable a lazy medium to put a $5 note in his purse. Now that I know how the trick was done, I am surprised only at its simplicity.

In the first place, Foster had to ascertain his visitor's name. This he did by a simple device. When Mr. Smith sat at the only table in the room he was unaware that beneath the writing pad was what is called "copying paper," an oiled and blackened sheet, which, when placed beneath the paper one is writing upon, conveys the impression to another piece of paper beneath it. The same kind of paper is used in making duplicate copies in typewriting. A hard pencil was placed where Mr. Smith would pick it up, and in order to write his name he unconsciously bore down upon the copy paper. The attendant expertly withdrew the copy and carried it to his employer. Now, to prepare for the blood act.

Bare your arm to the elbow. In the right hand hold a thin piece of steel, but with a slightly rounded edge that will not cut. As you probably do not possess such an instrument, take a portion of a very stiff visiting or business card, and bearing its edge rather hard upon the under portion of your arm, follow the outlines of any letters you choose. The result will be barely discernible white lines that soon pass away. Five minutes later, with your hand on a crumpled piece of paper, rub that portion of your arm as vigorously as you can, and you will be surprised when you see the letters you have outlined appearing beneath the skin in the full vividness of your own blood. Now you see what Foster did. He marked the name "John Smith" on his arm, drew down his shirt sleeve, put on his coat, and walked in the reception room. His rubbing the envelope over his arm was simply intended to delude John Smith with the

belief that his name was conveyed from the enclosed paper to Foster's blood. Simple, isn't it? Yet it is far more complex than many of the fake mediumistic tricks. There are endless varieties of the deception.

I am familiar with many similar instances in which Foster figured, most of which could be traced to a natural source and explained on non-spiritual grounds. Part of his modus operandi, for instance, was to go to a town like Haverstraw, N. Y., and closely study the tombstones in a graveyard, and after that he picked up all the town gossip possible about prominent families and their antecedents. Then he would travel, say, to Yonkers, and put up at the best hotel, where he would watch the register for arrivals from Haverstraw. He managed that it was brought to the attention of all Haverstraw men that "the great Foster" was in the hotel. Frequently he became familiar in advance with the faces of his victims, and startled them when they entered his apartment by greeting them by name.

The visitor would be requested to secretly write the name of a deceased friend on a piece of paper, which he was to fold in a certain manner and place on a table. When this had been done Foster would exclaim: "Not folded quite right, my dear sir," and, stepping forward, he would make a slight change in the arrangement of the bit of paper. In that brief moment, and before the eyes of the visitor, Foster, by his wonderful sleight-of-hand power, would exchange for the paper containing the name a piece similarly folded. Then, returning to the corner of the room, reading the written name as he walked, he would bare one arm, and by a rapid movement of a sharp stylus—the ancient instrument of writing—he would outline the letters as I have already described. Turning and rubbing his arm or holding it tightly at the wrist until it became engorged with blood, he would startle his visitor with the dead man's name displayed in letters of blood. Having thus proved a spirit control and presence, he would sit down and write a message so full of the tombstone lore and town gossip he had acquired that the visitor became fully convinced that the communications were from another world.

WE HAVE 4,567 PERSONS OVER 100 YEARS OLD

WE are getting longer lived. There are nearly a thousand people of 100 years and over more than there were ten years ago. The census of 1910 gave the number of centenarians as 3,555. The census of 1920 showed an increase of 4,567.

Vital statistics as prepared by the Census Bureau give the population of the country at 105,710,620 as against 91,972,26 ten years ago, a gain of 13,738,354. This gain then is more than ten per cent. of the accreated population. Of the total, a little more than 10 per cent. are infants of five years or less. Two per cent., or in actual figures, 1,141,939, are babes of one year or less, and there were more boys than girls born in 1920 by about 26,000.

The proportion of persons at or above the age of twenty-five has become larger from census to census since 1880, the increase from 1910 to 1920 having been especially marked in the case of 45 and over.

While it may be true, as Kipling remarked, that the "female of the species is more deadly than the male," it is a fact that of the centenarians there are more women than men. This is the more remarkable in that the whole population shows a considerable greater percentage of male over female. Amongst the centenarians, however, there are 2,706 women and only 1,512 men, and indeed from the age of 75 up, this general trend towards increased longevity of women becomes more and more evident.

It is a peculiar thing in this regard that this preponderance begins to be marked at fifty, and from twenty-five to that age there are fewer females than males. From five years on to twenty-five there is a slight increase in the proportion of female over male, generally not more than one or two-tenths per cent., but in actual figures running from 100,000 to half a million. This is the balance at fifty. Then the males start to drop off in the proportion until about seventy-five, when the balance is about even, after which the females hold the high record for longevity.

THIEF-CATCHERS!

by

Arthur Lockwood

TIMOTHY MULLIGAN thought this world's trials would be over the day his much-coveted appointment as patrolman came through. He had feared the examination until he found it was easy. His intelligence and his six feet of muscular clay served him well through the ordeal, and he passed without difficulty.

The course of training in the police school was almost unnecessary for him. He fairly "ate up" the instruction in the art of "thief-catching," as the fledgling officers facetiously called it, and the calisthenic drills scarcely fatigued him. He was the kind of man the force wanted, and somehow there came over him the consciousness that he was being watched by eyes higher up—and watched because things were expected of him.

This fed a new anxiety which he keenly felt the night he found himself in a new uniform and assigned to a beat for the first time. Much as he had feared the examinations before he actually put his hand to them, he was more fearful, now that the test of service, the trial of performance might bring him to ignominious failure. He might pass a store that was being robbed, a murder might be committed with him near by and ignorant of it until he was called to the carpet to explain why.

These were genuine misgivings. Luck might be against him and break him completely through no fault of his own.

Already he had heard talk in the reserve room about luck and its importance in a police career. Very clearly it had been pointed out to Mulligan how an opportunity to distinguish himself might be denied the best of men and thus easily enough work his ruin. Success to a policeman—promotion, increased pay, more interesting work and the rest of the desirable things it entailed—depended on a man's conduct when opportunity presented itself. But without this opportunity one could build up no enviable record of arrests, make no daring captures, nor otherwise pile up merits.

Being a new policeman, Mulligan was given, upon this first night of his career, a beat that was quiet. Though it was more or less fashionable as a neighborhood, crime rarely disturbed its nightly quietude. Occasionally there was a burglary and rarely a hold-up. The mansion of old Mark Bayne was one possible good haul, but it was safeguarded by an elaborate system of burglar alarms. There were other homes of business and professional men less wealthy. In the history of Grayton's crime little of it happened here. Of course Mayor Sidesley was fairly wealthy.

Mayor Sidesley's home on his beat! The thought had him dreaming wildly. Suppose, he thought, I should catch a burglar looting the mayor's home! Suppose I happened along just in time to nab a highwayman helping himself to the mayor's valuables with one hand

while leveling a six-shooter at him with the other! Or I might happen upon some of his political enemies—radicals! Just in time to save the mayor's home from destruction by a bomb! Maybe save the mayor's life!

Dreams were rosy things. In his fancy Mulligan saw himself called to "His Honor's" office to receive congratulations which preceded his appointment to the detective bureau. Vaguely there came to his mind a movie he had once seen in which the cop saved some family jewels, thwarted an attempt to blackmail the wealthy head of the family and finally married the wealthy man's daughter. He was dreaming now without stint; there was no limit to the good fortune he might have.

Absently Mulligan walked along swinging his club. So absorbed was he that "Slim" Fogarty, the slipperiest pickpocket and cracksman that ever baffled a police force, passed him unrecognized. An alert policeman would have recognized and arrested him. Mulligan had orders in his pocket, issued only that day, that commanded "Slim's" arrest on sight. It wouldn't have been a bad catch for a beginner either, though, as usual, there would be no evidence to convict the wary "Slim." But "Slim," the defiant, caught up with him and passed Mulligan, his head high in his confidence.

Mulligan was busy with pleasant details of his palaver with the mayor. He was even mentally phrasing his speech. "That was nothin', yer honor; I jest did my dooty, an' I figger a man oughta do that anyway," he was saying. That sounded fine—nice and modest, and a speech calculated to charm the chief executive.

Lost in this reverie, he walked until he found himself actually at the gate which marked the entrance to the mayor's home. Out of the shadows it rose, a bleak and drab frame dwelling, setting back a hundred feet from the sidewalk. Mulligan paused and looked at it in contemplation. There was the home he had been dreaming he might save from destruction. His thoughts took an analytical tack. What was it made his beat dull and prosaic except for dreams? Why was it uneventful when it could be adventurous; why was it colorless when it could be exciting? Just luck. Fate was keeping opportunity away.

But why? Who are the people Fate rewards? he asked himself. He thought of the gold prospector who searches thousands of acres until he strikes the tiny spot that yields the riches. He thought of the baseball scout. This man wastes many valuable days and thousands of dollars searching through a mass of players until he finds the one who rewards him a hundred times. Chemists, too, have searched for half a century before finding the formula which was to make their fame deathless and their reward ample even for their effort. All these men were meeting Chance more than halfway. They were coming to her; they were looking for opportunity.

Mulligan saw an analogy between all these lucky ones and himself. He had great faith in his luck and a gambling spirit. Maybe if he came halfway good fortune might favor him. Anything was possible, and right here Mulligan framed what was to be his policy and creed as long as he remained a patrolman. He would always investigate all possibilities.

The mayor's house was a possibility. "Every night," he said to himself, "as long as I am on this beat, I will thoroughly look over these premises. Maybe nuthin'll come of it, but it's a chance that is certainly worth the little extra work. Anyway, I can't lose."

So he opened the gate and approached the house on his first pilgrimage to the Shrine of Chance. Everything was dark, indicating that no one was within. Windows were all secure in front, and not a thing could be regarded as suspicious. He turned to his right and went around to the side, continuing his inspection. Here, too, everything was secure except——

His eye fell on a cellar window. Was it open? He dropped to his knees to make sure. It was!

Blindly, eagerly, he jumped through to the basement floor. In an instant he had brought his flashlight into play. He had moved quickly, so quickly that the man in the cellar was unable to hide before the flashlight beam caught him.

Mulligan recognized him from a recent "show-up" at police headquarters—"Slim" Fogarty!

"Don't make a move to get away!" Mulli-

gan commanded sternly. He wanted to make capture certain. "The house is surrounded. We've been tipped off to this job." He lied to discourage a fight or an attempt to escape.

"Slim" said nothing. He was too clever to waste useless words when he could employ precious time thinking. Crouching down on a flight of wooden stairs which he had unsuccessfully tried to clamber up before he was caught, "Slim" was a study in cunning. His beady little snake eyes gleamed not half so much with fright as with sagacity. Like a cornered animal, he watched his captor intently.

Mulligan whipped out his handcuffs and bent over "Slim." The manacles were almost on his wrists when "Slim" made his one desperate play to escape. With incredible swiftness he brought a "jimmy" down on the head that was bowed over him. Mulligan sank to the floor, the handcuffs clanked on the cement and the flashlight went out.

Like a panther "Slim" was upon the prone man, but the limp body he felt assured him that there would be no struggle. He groped about and got the flashlight. The house was surrounded, he had no time to waste, but his plan of escape was all clear to him. He fairly tore Mulligan's uniform off, coat and trousers, in his haste. Two minutes later he had climbed through the cellar window and was gone, wearing the garb of which Mulligan, a short time before, had been very proud indeed.

First Mulligan was conscious of a terrific throbbing pain in his head. Then there came over him the vague consciousness that he was lying on a cold, hard floor. The effort by which he raised himself to a sitting posture caused him agony. His hand felt something hard; it was the flashlight. With it he discovered his partial nakedness and the clothes of the burglar beside him. Clearer and clearer came his recollection of events. Slowly and with great pain he pulled on the burglar's clothes. After they were on he tried to rise, but fell to the floor again in a faint. He lay there for several minutes without moving. Again returning consciousness brought him intense pain. He made an effort to roll over, and as he did he felt something hard digging into his hip.

He sat up and felt on the floor beneath him. There was nothing. Then he felt in the pocket of the burglar's coat and his hand closed on something bulky. He pulled it forth and, after finding the flashlight, looked at it.

Jewelry!

There was a handful of it, a string of pearls, two watches, several rings, a couple set with large diamonds, and some women's trinkets.

"That was nuthin', yer honor," said Mulligan next day when the mayor called at the station house. "I jest did my dooty, an' I figger a man oughta do that anyway." Mulligan's smile was framed in the bandages around his head. His smile faded. "But it makes me sick," he said, "to think that dirty thief got away."

"Forget it!" exclaimed the mayor. "You did a fine piece of work. You were on the job, you saved the stuff, and you've got the goods with which we can convict Fogarty. That's a lot more than some of these "thief-catchers" can do. They are good enough to arrest him, but you never see them convict ligan was very grateful for these words of the chief magistrate.

The mayor paused. For some reason Mulligan was very grateful for these words.

"Yes," the mayor continued. "He was arrested early this morning by a headquarters detective. That's what I call co-operation. That detective makes a fine assistant for you. You don't want to be bothered with details anyway, so I'm going to make you Sergeant Mulligan and all detectives will be your assistants."

With a Detective's Eye

By CHARLES J. WILSON

FRESH from a tonsorial parlor and shoe-shining emporium, Tommy felt comfortably well-gromed, and his new flannel suit and Panama hat contributed to his prosperous appearance. He was not bad-looking, and he knew it, with his snapping black eyes, olive skin and dark hair. Were it not for the tendency to conceit in his manner as he settled back into an inside seat of an open car, the effect would be altogether prepossessing.

The car was bound for Coney Island, and after a week of hot weather in a sweltering office, Tommy enjoyed in anticipation his approaching surf bath in the ocean.

He spent a few moments looking about him and noting the variety of shapes in straw hats, as is customary with a man who has just bought one. Then he devoted himself to the evening edition of the yellow journal published that noon. The funny pictures interested him for a time, especially the maneuvers of Wily Willy, the lynx-eyed detective. Anything in the detective line appealed to Tommy. From this he perused a special article absent-mindedly until he reached the following passage which held his attention:

"Keep your eyes open. Every one sees what he is looking for. Two men walking side by side in a street see a totally different series of objects. The architect sees the houses in detail. The botanist sees the growing things. The conscientious householder, who has been toiling with the lawn mower, sees the condition of the grass, etc. Thousands of interesting things of educational value are occurring all around you without your seeing them. Noted men pass you by. The man sitting beside you in the street car may be a notorious burglar, and with the trained eye of a detective——"

"By Jove, there's something in that," thought Tommy. He had noticed more hats that morning than in a month before. "The man sitting beside you in the street car," he read again, and glancing sideways he took note of the man on his right. He was short and fair and, as near as Tommy could see, thoroughly respectable. A little sprouting mustache suggested a counter-jumper more than a burglar.

"That fellow wouldn't be flattered," thought Tommy, "if he knew why I was looking at him. He don't seem much like a crook, but I suppose there are all kinds; there's Raffles, for instance."

He continued reading without much interest until he realized that the article he had chanced upon was an account of a burglary on St. Nicholas avenue, and the description of the thieves gave him a start. They had been seen distinctly as they left the house. One was tall and dark and the other shorter and fair, with a small blond mustache.

Tommy quivered with excitement as he realized that this description coincided perfectly with the party at his elbow. All his sleuth-hound instincts were on edge. Moreover, he read further that the thieves were both of genteel appearance who had boldly carried off five thousand dollars' worth of jewels in a small black satchel in broad daylight. His eye again turned involuntarily to the right.

The fellow had finished his paper and appeared nervous. Tommy could not make as thorough an examination as he would have liked because the chap was glancing all about as if to ascertain if any one were watching him. Certainly suspicious, thought the embryo detective, and then his eye caught sight of a small black satchel on the floor between the man's feet.

Now why was that fellow carrying a satchel

to Coney Island if he were not guilty. Probably he had the jewels in it and thought to conceal himself in the Saturday crowds. And what made him so nervous? He certainly looked guilty with his shifting eyes. Perhaps he knew he was suspected. The thing to do was to follow the chap when he got off the car and watch for more clues.

By the time they had reached the beach Tommy had become so excited he could scarcely sit still, and when the car stopped he made ready to follow on the jump. He was convinced the thief knew he was being watched and would make a dash for it through the crowds.

The blond villain sure enough was poorly concealing his impatience at the slowness of the passengers getting off in front of him. As soon as he reached the step he jumped to the ground and ran. Tommy prepared to follow at all costs when he tripped over something in the passage; it was the satchel. Hardly realizing the import of this lucky find, he snatched it up hurriedly and sprang from the step. But in the second's delay the other had disappeared in the mass of people about the car.

As Tommy stood, with his eyes peeled in all directions, he caught sight of him again, a dozen yards away. He had apparently been stopped by a policeman and was gesticulating wildly. Tommy made a dash for them and nearly bowled over a fat man standing in the way. Shouting a confused apology, he made off again in the direction he had seen the pair. Strange, quick as he had been, they had disappeared. Probably the policeman had taken the thief to jail, and he hurried up the street, but could find no trace of them. The dense crowds prevented anything like a thorough search.

By this time Tommy had become conscious of the satchel. He could inquire for the station house and turn it in, but curiosity impelled him to have a peek into it first. Looking about for an available place, he saw a bathhouse across the street. He could engage a room and open the satchel where he was perfectly free from intrusion.

After suffering agonies of impatience waiting in line for his turn he finally secured accommodations, hurried to his room and carefully locked the door. Tommy was now in a tremor of excitement, for, to tell the truth, he had not fully made up his mind whether to turn the jewels over to the police or appropriate them himself. Five thousand dollars did not come into one's clutches every day. With trembling fingers he pressed the spring; the satchel flew open and disclosed a bathing suit.

He stepped back, aghast; the bottom was knocked out of his finely spun theory; the blond chap was an ordinary pleasure seeker like himself. Probably he worked behind a ribbon counter in a department store. But how about the policeman? And the perfect description? "Aw, well, anyhow," mumbled Tommy, with all the resilience of a deflated inner tube, "I'll have my swim and make up my mind what to do afterwards."

He undressed and began to get into the rented suit supplied by the bathhouse. Clumsy and thick, it seemed half-washed; he took another look at the suit in the satchel. It was new, the tag still on it, $4.25; a beauty, too, all blue except that, on holding it up, he found there was a broad yellow and red stripe around the edges. A most unusual combination, but under the circumstances he could not be a chooser, and he got into it in short order. The fact that it belonged to some one else did not serve to lessen the satisfaction that he felt in his symmetrical and properly clad figure as he closed and locked the door.

The key was on a string calculated to go around his neck. He did not want to be bothered with that, and finding a nail partly hidden behind the door casing, he hung it up and started for the beach. As he turned at the end of the aisle he just caught a glimpse of some one at the other end peeking around the corner, only emerging as the object of his scrutiny disappeared. That was odd, and he stopped a moment to peek back around his own corner. Good heavens! it was the blond, whose bathing suit he had on. No chance of his mistaking the thing either with that red and yellow band. The fellow must have seen him clearly before he turned. Tommy thought immediately of the water as a place to hide the incriminating stripes, and he made a dash for it.

There was quite a high sea on and the timid bathers were kept pretty close to shore by the curling breakers. Tommy belonged in the same class, for he could not swim, but there was the necessity of covering the suit. He plowed ahead for deep water, forgetting his terrors until a big comber caught him in the chest and swept him off his feet. A wild commotion followed that scattered the nearby bathers. By the time Tommy had caught a rope and dragged himself to his feet again he had taken in several quarts of water and looked like a signal of distress as he spluttered madly for air.

He had had enough of the ocean, and hauled himself into shallow water. With bulging eyes and pale face he reached the beach and made his way, dripping and shivering, to the bathhouse, keeping a dazed lookout for the owner of the conspicuous suit. There seemed to be a clear field, and he dodged around the corner and entered his aisle.

Congratulating himself that there seemed to be no blond man in evidence, he proceeded with more confidence to his room and reached for the key. It was gone. He tried the door and it opened. Strange, he remembered locking it and hanging up the key. The room seemed unaccountably bare. Good heavens! where were his clothes? Gone! Also the satchel!

He fell limply onto the stool. Probably some of that blond's doing; he must have seen where he put the key and appropriated his clothes. By George! maybe it was the burglar after all. The detective spirit animated him once more, and he jumped to his feet with a sudden impulse to find the wretch. Alas! he sank back to the stool again at the realization of his predicament. What could he do without his clothes?

His despondency increased as he ruminated on his chances of getting home. He speculated drearily on the figure he would cut, hiking it back to New York as an athletic crank in the bathing suit, Panama hat and tan shoes. The shouts of the carefree bathers on the beach jarred on his melancholy thoughts.

After what seemed an hour of drear brooding he heard the tramp of heavy-soled shoes, accompanied by a light patter, coming hurriedly down the aisle. The next moment his door was flung violently open and the blond, with a stalwart policeman, confronted him.

An awkward pause ensued until Tommy noticed the satchel in the young man's hand and, thinking it contained his clothes, made a dive for it, coming in contact with the outstretched arm of the policeman.

"Shtand back, you thievin' blackguard, and give an account of yerself," said the brawny Irishman; "where's the jewels?".

Tommy gazed in blank astonishment. "Jewels!" he gasped.

"Yis, jewels. We have your description in the paper here: tall, dark and genteel. Ye might as well confess. This gentleman rode down on the car wid ye and sized ye up for a suspicious character by yer nervous actions and shiftin' eyes before he ever noticed the account of the burglary wid yer full description."

Tommy began to see daylight. They had both been reading the same paper and had jumped to the same conclusions. It had not dawned upon him until that moment that he himself answered the other description. He had an inspiration. "But, officer," he exclaimed, "that man himself is the thief and has some object in accusing me. Read the other description."

The officer looked annoyed for a moment and then looked at the paper: "Short, fair, with small blond mustache." Tommy watched the other's face at the reading, and was somewhat repaid for his troubles. Then he continued as the policeman gazed at the astonished victim: "He's got my clothes in the satchel now."

Blondy was dazed by the rapid proceedings, but managed to say in defense:

"And you've got on my bathing suit."

The Irishman was getting befogged by the rapidly accumulating evidence. "Hold on, hold on," he commanded; "wan ting at a time."

Tommy was beginning to enjoy the situation. He could understand now that his clothes had been taken to prevent his getting away until Blondy could bring a policeman, after he had rediscovered his thief in the bathhouse.

"What have ye got in that satchel?" asked the officer.

"I've got his clothes," began Blondy, "but——"

"Hold on," interrupted the officer. "Now, whose bathing suit is that ye have on?"

"His," laughed Tommy. "I——"

"That's enough fer me; ye can explain to the captain. Now dress yerself and come along to the station-house, both of yez."

Tommy's grin departed; the Irishman meant business and they had to go.

The captain, when the culprits were presented to him, managed to keep a fairly serious countenance while he heard the story and then dismissed the case, as he presumed neither party wanted to prefer charges against the other, both being guilty.

As they walked out together Blondy said to Tommy:

"Do you think I look like a burglar?"

"No," laughed Tommy, "you don't look any more like a burglar than—than I do."

Tommy often thinks about the law of selective attention and wishes he could pass a blond man without feeling foolish.

STAGE SHOOTING

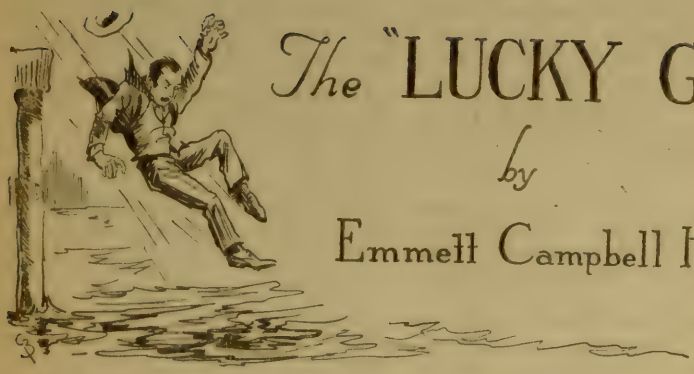
A NOTED professional shot, who, with his wife traveled with a Wild West show, thus explained to a party of acquaintances how the fancy rifle-shooting is done on the stage. One of the oldest is the bell trick. This is done by having a target placed on the stage with a very small quarter-inch hole as a centre, through which the marksman is supposed to put his bullet. Surrounding this is a piece of black cloth, and back of the cloth a saw plate. If the marksman hits within eight or twelve inches of the centre, the bell, or rather the plate, which is set loosely, will ring, and the audience will naturally suppose the bullet or bullets penetrated the bull's-eye. This explains stage shots placed from twenty to twenty-five shots in the bull's-eye (?) in so many seconds.

The next trick is the match trick. This is done by placing a large number of parlor matches in a circle, with the heads of the same pointed inwardly. If the marksman hits, or rather puts his bullet, which is not difficult to do, any place in the circle, he must light one of the matches, thus lighting the circle. This trick is always done at the back of the stage, and the audience cannot see any of the matches, and supposes, naturally, that it is but a single match. Another is to fasten a single match on an iron plate, and if the marksman shoots any reasonable distance near it, it will light from the splash of lead on the solid plate

In the cigar trick the marksman is supposed to shoot the ashes off a cigar held in the mouth of an assistant. This trick is generally a bona-fide one, but can be done by having a wire run through the cigar to the ashes, and at the report of the gun have the assistant touch the wire with his tongue and knock the ashes off. Shooting a silver dime from the mouth and between the teeth of an assistant is done by having one marked with a bullet, and showing one not marked to the audience; the assistant changes at the report of the gun, and spits out the marked one and shows it to the audience.

The thimble trick is done by placing a thimble on the assistant's hand with a thin string attached, and at the report of the gun it is pulled off by another assistant behind the scenes. Shooting through the ring of a watch is done by shooting over the ring, and then, before showing it to the audience, placing the ring of the watch over the hole made, and on a nail placed there beforehand.

Snuffing the candle, which looks so difficult, is done by having the candle close to a solid block of wood. The concussion of the bullets puts out the light, although the bullet hits within three inches of the candle proper. The professional gave an exhibition at one time in a Pennsylvania town where the authorities strictly forbade the firing of solid bullets, and gave as good satisfaction as though he were firing and doing the trick bona fide. So much for stage rifle shooting.



The "LUCKY GUY"

by

Emmett Campbell Hall

AS Lucky Guy ran he was bitterly and hopelessly conscious that he was totally out of the thing which had been his for so long and in such abundant measure that what had originally been an expression of envious comment had become a name. A few old-timers might have recalled that he was once known as "Slick Dip" in familiar circles, but Lucky himself had almost forgotten that he was once Jimmie Edwards, and only a few ancient and practically forgotten police records listed him formally as James Howard Edwards.

Lucky should never have pulled his gat in this affair, thereby changing the status of the case from simple pocket-picking to whatever a state's attorney might choose to call it up to and including attempted murder. If Lucky had been himself, he would not have, but his judgment seemed to have departed with his luck. Whirling about, he fired his last cartridge at the nearer of the heavily running bulls, threw down the now useless automatic, sprang sideways to the cover of the corner of the warehouse just in time to avoid the better-aimed bullet that the officer sent in return for his wild shot, and sped along the open dock toward the river.

It had looked so very easy to lift the leather that Lucky may have been careless, or the trouble may have been his unsteady nerves, due to a failure of all his regular purveyors of coke to provide an adequate supply to meet his needs, or it may have been simply, as he had already begun to suspect, that Lady Luck had definitely abandoned him. However, he had fumbled the job, the cops had attempted to collar him, and Lucky had pulled his gun just as a flatfoot appeared at each end of the block. Lucky was sure that the man he had shot was not badly hurt, for no one seriously injured could have bellowed so fearfully—even yet Lucky could hear in the distance his howls of rage and pain. The middle of the block alley offered some chance for a getaway, but, emerging on the water-front street, the fugitive had almost run into the arms of an officer who had been warned by the shots and whistles to be on the lookout; it looked as though the whole police force had been concentrated just for Lucky's undoing.

As Lucky's feet pounded along the wharf an idea pounded itself into his head, and he almost stopped as the simple explanation of everything burst upon him.

"Why, Lady Luck just got jealous!" he panted. A bullet grooved the planking close beside him, and again he stepped on the gas,

making for the pier end. The officers behind him slowed a bit, satisfied that their game was trapped. If the fugitive took to the water they would easily reach the string-piece before he could get out of short range, and a swimming man is an easy target.

Lucky Guy had been noted not only as one of fortune's darlings, but for his firm refusal of the frequently offered favors of the fair sex. "Not any of 'em in mine!" had been his frequent declaration. "I don't claim to no college education, but I do know how to spell, and the way to spell 'trouble' is s-k-i-r-t." Then, of course, he fell for a jane, and equally, of course, fell hard. Miss Moll Hagan had been a member of a fairly successful organization on the Pacific coast, specializing in original variations of the old badger game, but she had found herself becoming rather too well known in that territory, owing to a sensational divorce suit in which she had had the misfortune to become complicated as co-respondent, and had come East, where she could start life anew without the handicap of an established record. Much to her astonishment, the alliance which the infatuated Lucky proposed was nothing short of that formal one which is sanctioned by church and state, and, for the novelty of the thing, she married him in all due form.

But Mrs. Lucky Guy Edwards didn't make a comfortable wife. This unique status, she seemed to think, gave her the privilege of not only declining to make any efforts to acquire money from strangers—the proper and natural source of supply—but of spending her husband's with both hands, with the result that Lucky soon experienced the novel and distressing sensation of being broke. Moreover, when he attempted to remonstrate in an entirely loving manner, intending to merely beat her up with his hands, instead of using a chair in the accepted style, she had revealed her true disposition and surprising physical ability by first scratching his face to pieces and then putting him out for the count with the aid of a quart of whisky applied externally and in the bottle. Lucky was convinced that marriage was a failure.

There was but one man on the dock along which Lucky Guy raced, with the law pounding in his rear. This was the watchman, and he, in response to the shouts from the street end, seemed to make heroic efforts to intercept the fugitive, only to be hurled aside as he made a grab. This lack of success may have been explained by the fact that at the moment of his attack he found it necessary to pause long enough to mutter: "'Sall right, kid!"

Followed closely—but not too closely—by the watchman, Lucky gained the pier end, looked desperately about him, and with an effective cry of despair plunged into the greasy water. When the puffing officers arrived he was nowhere to be seen.

"Went down like a rock!" the watchman declared. "Must have been just plain batty—couldn't swim a stroke. Yeh, I know who he was. Name of Edwards, James Howard Edwards. His old man uster run a junk shop an' was a friend o' mine. I dunno, but I heard that this here boy went bad. What you after him for?"

"Well, I guess he won't be bad any more," one of the officers commented grimly, with a look at the black water. "No story, bo," he added as a reporter whom he recognized hurried up. "Just a coke-batty dip jumped into the wet."

"It'll make a stickful, anyhow, and there's nothing breaking to-day," the reporter responded as they walked away together. "What was the guy's name?"

It seemed as though Lady Luck had relented toward her former favorite. Safely hidden in a room which he had kept for years against such a need, Lucky Guy read with satisfaction the newspaper account of his suicide and of the finding of his body. The latter detail was particularly gratifying. It appeared that his body had been taken from the water only a few hours after his drowning, being found in a ferry slip, where it had been rather thoroughly chopped and mashed by the boat's screw and rudder. Still, there was no doubt as to identity, Edwards having worn dark clothes, as did the mutilated body, and no other man being missing. The dock watchman who was the last to see Edwards alive was positive in his identification, and the coroner had issued a death certificate to the man's wife.

"Not so rotten," Lucky Guy chuckled. "In

a few days I'll slip out o' here, take that little bunch of fall money I got planted, and beat it to Cuba or somewhere where there's booze right out in the open. Where there's booze there'll be good pickings. And I'll start with a clean slate, and be rid o' that jane," he added with deep satisfaction.

The means by which Lucky had attained the privilege of reading of his own death and having granted to him the opportunity to wander forth unhampered by his previous career were most simple. He was as much at home in the water as a dock rat, a fact which he had been careful to conceal from even his most intimate friends, and when he had jumped from the pier he had merely dived under, made his way back to the shore through the forest of slimy piling, and eventually crawled up through a hole in the floor of a shack blocks away, after having traversed the gloomy length of an ancient and now disused sewer.

When the friend who served as Lucky's medium of contact with the world brought him an evening paper the next day, Lucky looked at him in astonishment. The fellow's eyes seemed popping from his head, and in his excitement he could merely gurgle inarticulately and point to the news sheet in his hand when Lucky demanded to know what was the cause of his agitation. "Gosh! Look 'ere! Holy smoke!" he finally gasped, and Lucky impatiently snatched the paper from his hand. News was still scarce evidently, for quite a display had been made of the story. It fairly jumped from the page:

"LUCKY GUY" ISN'T

Suicide Crook Just Missed Fortune.
Widow of Edwards Claims All

"What t'ell!" gasped Lucky, and with his own eyes bulging went on to read the details. From the article it appeared that one Jeremiah Edwards, uncle of the deceased James Howard Edwards, known in crook circles as "Lucky Guy," had some time before died in Australia, leaving a fortune of more than a million dollars which he had already transferred to the United States and which was on deposit with the Reliance Trust Company. Jeremiah's sole heir, the trust company had just discovered, was the nephew who had jumped into the river one day before he would have received notice of his inheritance. There being no other claimant to the estate and James having left no will, his widow would come into possession of the entire fortune.

"Widow gets its, does she?" Lucky mocked. "Yes, she does!"

"Well, don't she?" his friend demanded. "Maybe after she does you can get in touch with her and she'll split."

"She don't get it, because I'm going to get it," Lucky announced positively. "Yeh, I may be dead," he continued, forestalling his friend's objection, "but most any guy would come alive again for a million dollars!"

"They got the goods on you for that last job," the friend objected. "Soon as they find out you ain't dead, they'll send you up for that."

"Not when I got a million dollars fall money they won't," Lucky declared complacently. "Too bad it's too late to do anything this evening, but I'll go around in the morning and collect," he added with a happy smile.

"I hope it comes out all right, but somehow—oh, I dunno," his friend commented with gloomy vagueness.

When Mr. James Howard Edwards presented himself at the Reliance Trust Company the next morning the announcement of his identity did not create quite the effect he had expected. He was pained, in fact, to note that the atmosphere about him became steadily colder as he was passed on from one official to another, and was at last forced to realize that he was being regarded with unconcealed hostility.

"We have had presented to us apparently conclusive, and certainly legal, evidence of the death of James Howard Edwards," the president of the trust company remarked with what seemed to Lucky unnecessary emphasis as he glanced through some papers upon his desk. "However," he added, "if you are really the man, that fact can soon be established, as Mrs. Edwards's identification would be irrefutable. I am expecting her at any minute."

The next moment, as though she had been waiting for a cue, Lucky's bride stepped into the room. For an instant she paused, her eyes

resting briefly and indifferently upon her husband, then turned to the banker. "I trust I have not kept you waiting, Mr. Galton?" she said with a sad sweetness. "My husband's untimely death was a terrible shock to me, and I overslept this morning because of the sleeping powder which I had found it necessary to take."

"Say!" Lucky began aggressively, but the banker silenced him with a stern glance, then turned to the lovely young woman with a smile of sympathy and respectful admiration.

"Do not mention it, my dear Mrs. Edwards," he begged. "I am quite at your service at such time as suits your convenience. The documents are all ready for your signature. First, however, there is a little matter which should be disposed of," he added apologetically. "This—er—person represents himself to be your husband, James Howard Edwards." With a casual wave of his hand Mr. Galton indicated the dumfounded Lucky.

"Indeed?" Mrs. Edwards responded, raising her pretty eyebrows. "That is absurd, of course," she continued, "though he does slightly resemble poor Jimmie. I never saw this man before in my life. What can be his object in this attempted deception?"

"Ah, that isn't so difficult to guess," the banker said, "but he must be singularly stupid to have thought he could, as they say, 'get away with it.'" He waved his hand, as though eliminating Lucky from existence, and instantly the latter felt a firm hand laid upon his shoulder.

"Come along quietly now," said the special officer who had entered noiselessly through the door at Lucky's back, in response to the signal from the banker's call button.

A month later that nameless friend of Lucky Guy's who had brought newspapers was himself looking over a news sheet. At the bottom of a column on a back page he chanced across an insignificant item. He read:

"The unidentified man who attempted to impose himself upon the Reliance Trust Company as the deceased crook, 'Lucky Guy' Edwards, was to-day sentenced to two years' imprisonment for impersonation and attempting to obtain money under false pretences."

"Poor old Lucky Guy," this faithful friend sighed; "this time he sure wasn't. Or maybe he is at that," he added as one who would look on the brighter side. "At least he's clear of that jane, and likely he'll remember hereafter what he always said himself: that the way to spell 'trouble' is s-k-i-r-t."

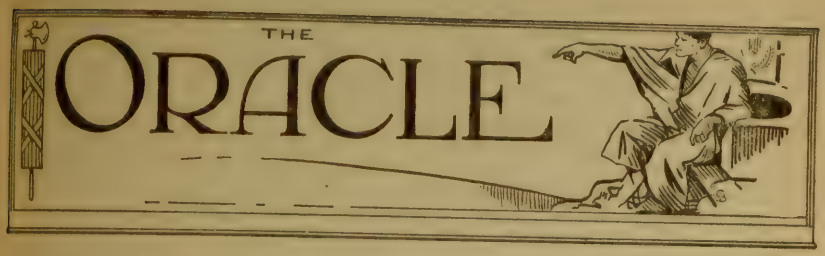
ARCHEOLOGIST FOUND A GREAT FORTUNE

STUDENTS of archeology and kindred subjects in Mexico are deeply interested in a remarkable story which comes from Colima, the capital of the state of that name and which borders the State of Jalisco on the south.

According to this remarkable tale, the French archeologist, Count Brisac de Saint Denis, who died recently in Paris, while doing research work in Mexico in 1900 came upon the tomb of an ancient Toltec King near the town of Comala, situated a short distance from Colima.

It is circumstantially asserted in narrating this tale that in this tomb, along with the mummified body of the king, were a dazzling collection of pearls, opals and gold dust of an estimated value of $10,000,000. It is stated that the count was able to get all of this enormous fortune out of the country and that it made him independently wealthy.

An investigation of the strange report is to be made by Mexican archeologists. Beyond the fact that it is well known that the count really did spend some time in investigating the ancient ruins of a prehistoric race near Comala, there is no authentic public knowledge here that he made any such discovery of buried treasure as he is now credited.



The Mystery of Man and How to Solve It

By RUSSELL RAYMOND VOORHEES

PART III—CHIROGNOMY

IN the last issue I discussed the science of palmistry and tried to show our readers how they could read their own palms. In this issue I shall try to take them a little farther into the science of the hand by telling them about chirognomy or the science of reading the meanings of the shape of the hand and fingers.

This science, like palmistry, is a very old one, coming to us from the ancient Greeks, who gave it the name it bears. They were great believers in the science, and in view of the large attainments that their civilization made, it might not be amiss to pay some little attention to chirognomy.

In a very vague way we all believe that the hand itself, without regard to the lines on the palm, indicates something about the person. For instance it is generally believed that a person with long fingers and a generally long hand has what is called piano hands and can learn to play the piano. And most of us have seen hands that are so dainty and artistic that we have concluded at once that their possessor must be an artist. And some of the men readers of this article will recall hands that seemed to have been made for service at some free-lunch counter. So you see we all believe a little bit in chirognomy in spite of ourselves. But isn't it possible if we knew more about the science of what hands and fingers mean that we might believe more and more in it? Well, we shall see.

In the first place there are seven types of hands, and each type of hand indicates a separate type of person. If the reader will study his hand as he reads it, he will be able to classify his hand, and in that way classify himself.

The Elementary Hand is the first hand to consider because it is of the lowest type, hardly more than the brute paw. This hand is very short and thick-set, although the palm is sometimes rather large in proportion to the fingers. The thumb on such a hand is generally short, very short, and frequently it turns backward. These hands are generally to be found among unskilled laborers, and denote a large amount of the animal, which of course eliminates much if any mental development. Such people have a bad temper and seem to live with only one purpose in mind, namely, to eat, drink and sleep. No one who ever made any mental attainments ever had a hand like this. It is truly the hand of the laborer who works by rule and command instead of with his head.

The Square Hand is the second type we will consider. This hand is so called because the palm is almost if not quite square and the fingers are more or less square as well. The thumb, however, is generally well formed and longer than the thumb of the other type which we have just considered. This hand belongs

to the realm of the practical, and those who possess it will be among the most practical people to be found. Such people have a brain and know how to use it, but it is always along practical and materialistic lines, and never along lines of idealism and imagination. These people have a great deal of determination and so-called grit, and for that reason generally get where they set out for, provided they are trying to achieve something that is in the realm of the practical. They are serious and methodical workers.

The Spatulate Hand denotes the nervous type, and is a hand that is generally crooked and somewhat irregular. The tips of the fingers are padded somewhat. These people seem to possess a storehouse of energy, and are to be found continually hammering away at something. They do a great deal of work in their lifetime and frequently are known for their original thought while doing it. They are the opposite of the former types in that they possess a large amount of imagination and creative ability, and it is generally well-developed, too. They have an inventive turn of mind and are frequently to be found among inventors. They are more or less unconventional, emotional and demonstrative.

The Philosophic Hand is a long, bony, angular hand with joints that seem somewhat knotty or rather large. The hand is generally thin. These people are the students of the world, and frequently if not always are fond of such studies as philosophy, after which the hand is named. Literature is another study that greatly appeals to these people. Such people care less for crowds and large audiences than other types; they relish more the few friends and even enjoy being alone, so they can study and gain knowledge. This type of hand represents the highest development of the mentality just as the Elementary Hand represents the lowest form of mental development.

The Conic or Artistic Hand is one of those artistic-looking hands with graceful, tapering fingers and cannot be mistaken. Such a hand indicates an artistic temperament, and frequently denotes an artist as well. Beautiful surroundings and beautiful things of all kinds will make a strong appeal to such a person, and their idea of color, rhythm and time will be much more marked than in people possessing other types of hands. If the hand is soft it means a sluggishness that makes it difficult for that person to work. They prefer to spend their time admiring the creations of others rather than to put forth the energy necessary to create art and beautiful things for themselves. The harder and firmer the hand the less this sluggishness will be evident and the more they will possess ambition to create for themselves.

The Psychic or Idealistic Hand denotes a high degree of mental development, but because of the large amount of ideality and dreaming that such a hand denotes it often means that people who possess such hands are less of a success than some of the other types. There is very little of the practical in such people, they live in a different world from the world that the rest of us live in. It is a very beautiful world, to be sure, but too ideal for achievement. When these people have to earn their own living they find it very hard, since they are too idealistic and not practical enough to buck the knock-about world and win. Frequently these people possess considerable psychic power.

The Mixed Hand is just what its name indicates, a mixture of the other types, and if not all of the other types then at least some of them. Frequently the palm will be of one type and the fingers of another type, or, as happens in many cases, the fingers will be of several types. These people possess so many talents and abilities that they are a jack-of-all-trades and generally a master of none. They can do so many things that they do not possess the constancy necessary to stick to one thing and see it through. In a low state of mental development they are the people who can do almost anything and talk of almost anything, but not enough of any one thing to get them anywhere. However, when the mental development is of a higher order they are a kind of people who can stick to one thing, especially if they develop their will power, and with steady effort succeed at least partly.

So much for the seven types of hand. Now we will consider the fingers and the thumb, because they, too, can tell us something about ourselves.

Generally speaking, the thumb denotes will

power and self-control. Therefore the shorter the thumb the nearer to the animal a person is, while the longer the thumb the more will power he possesses.

The first finger on the hand is called the Finger of Jupiter, and if this finger is long it denotes a desire for power, while if short it indicates a dislike of responsibility with very little ambition.

The second finger is the Finger of Saturn. If this finger is long it indicates a person with reserve and prudence and with a studious nature. A short finger denotes a person void of serious intentions.

The third finger is the Finger of the Sun, and when this is long it is indicative of a love for the beautiful and a constant seeking after fame. The short finger denotes the opposite of this.

The fourth is the Finger of Mercury and it indicates considerable mental power and development with an ability to master languages. It also indicates considerable power of expression. The short finger denotes difficulty in expressing thoughts and ideas and a weaker mentality.

There are seven mounts on the palm of the hand that further indicate the character of the person. So we will next consider these.

The first mount is the Mount of Jupiter, which is located under the first finger. If it is large it denotes superstition and a desire to lead. If it is medium it indicates a love of power, loyalty, truth and generosity. If it is small it means a lack of dignity and self-respect.

The Mount of Saturn is located under the second finger, and if this is large it designates a lover of solitude, a person with remorseful tendencies as well as a possible suicide. If it is medium it indicates prudence, wisdom and success. If it is small it means incapacity for any serious application.

The Mount of the Sun is located under the third finger. If it is large it means a love of gold, envious, a spendthrift, a noisy and talkative person. If it is medium it indicates artistic reputation, hopefulness and a love of beauty and riches. If it is small it means that that person will fill a commonplace position in life.

The Mount of Mercury is located under the fourth finger. If it is large it is indicative of ignorance, theft and pretentions. When it is medium in size it means a love of science and eloquence, and when it is small it denotes stupidity.

The Mount of Mars is located on the opposite side of the palm from the thumb and halfway between the base of the fourth finger and the end of the palm. The Head Line, which I discussed in a former article, generally runs right into the Mount of Mars. If this mount is large it denotes a large supply of anger, a tyrant and a cruel person. If it is medium it indicates courage, self-respect and resignation, while if it is small it means cowardice.

The Mount of the Moon is located below the Mount of Mars and in the extreme corner of the palm diagonally across from the Mount of Jupiter. If this is large it denotes discontentment. When it is medium it indicates imagination and enthusiasm, while if it is small it means a coldness of nature.

The Mount of Venus is located at the base of the thumb on the palm. When this mount is large it denotes coquetry, idleness, vainness and licentiousness. If it is medium it indicates beauty, tenderness and a desire to please, while if it is small it means a coldness and a lack of energy.

In shaking hands with a person it is often noticed that their hand is very hard or possibly moist. This has a meaning, too, as we shall presently see. The condition of the hand, whether it is hard or soft, moist or dry, indicates something about the person that is well worth knowing.

A hard hand shows a person who is capable of true love, but who has very little tenderness.

A soft, more pliable hand indicates a greater degree of tenderness, but less true love. While the hard hand is ambitious, the soft hand is careless and indolent.

A cool and soft hand indicates a healthy system.

A moderately cool and soft hand denotes a rather over-developed nervous system.

A damp, hot palm indicates lung trouble.

A cold, damp palm indicates excessive habits and a liver that needs a little hustling up.

Even the nails give us a little insight into a person, especially their health.

Long nails indicate a constitution that is not as robust as it might be. Such people are liable to the various diseases of the lungs and chest.

Short nails denotes a tendency toward a weak heart. When small white specks are seen on the nail, it indicates a serious condition of the nervous system.

Narrow nails indicate a weakness in the spinal column.

Broad nails denote a tendency toward paralysis.

Large moons on the nails indicate a healthy blood system, but when these moons are unusually large they denote too much blood pressure, in which case a person should guard against a bursting of a blood vessel. And of course small moons mean the reverse of this, a poor circulatory system.

And these are some of the things that can be told from the hand and fingers. To be sure, there is much more that can be told, but it takes study to be able to appreciate these other details. I have given enough here for any reader to test the value of the science.

In the next issue I shall discuss the science of physiognomy, or the method of designating character from the face—the eyes, the nose, the mouth, the chin, the cheeks and so on. Do you believe in that? Be sure to read the article and be convinced.

THE GREAT WONDERS

HOW do the colossal works of our age compare with those of antiquity? Did the ancient "seven wonders of the world" surpass in magnitude, grandeur and mechanical genius the great achievements of our day? The greatest, or at least the most massive of the ancient wonders were the pyramids of Egypt. Long before Abraham was born, the seventy pyramids were silently watching the moving panorama of the world. But there is not an expert civil engineer in the United States that would not take a contract to duplicate the whole seventy.

Five years' time and ample money would be all the engineer would ask for, although the Gizeh, or Great Pyramid, was thirty years building, with a force of a hundred thousand men.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon would not be much of a "wonder" in our day. Their base was a square of four acres, rising on stone terraces to 300 feet at the summit. Lead sheets to retain moisture above covered the stone work, with earth on top. Trees, shrubbery, flowers, fountains and the like completed the misnamed "hanging" gardens.

The Colossus of Rhodes was a statue made of metal plates, like the Statue of Liberty, in New York harbor. It was about ninety feet high, less than one-third as high as the Liberty statue.

The Temple of Diana, at Ephesus, was a building 225x425 feet at the base. It was chiefly noted for its pillars, 127 in number, and weighing 150 tons each. Every one of these pillars was a present from a king, in all representing 127 kingdoms, and this fact added to the fame of the temple. But fame finally ruined it. An ambitious youth, with the object of making a short jump to fame and immortality, fired the temple in the night, when all Ephesus was carousing over the birth of Alexander, and it was totally destroyed.

The Pharos of Alexandria was a lighthouse at the entrance to the harbor. It was 400 feet high, and so substantially built that it lasted 1,600 years. The statue of Jupiter at Athens was a creditable work of art, and the Mausoleum, which Artemesia built for the remains of her departed husband, the King of Caria, was doubtless a very clever piece of sepulchral architecture.

But the only one of the seven wonders in existence to-day are the Pyramids of Egypt. There is hardly an authentic trace even of any of the rest.

Current News

BARRAGE OF OIL SHELLS TO CALM SEA

Oil thrown on the waves will calm them. Hence it has been suggested, says Popular Science, that oil shells be fired from life-line guns at the Coast Guard stations to calm the waters around stranded ships.

If the oil shells are hurled well to the windward of a ship, and are made to explode on contact with the water, the oil will soon drift around the ship and make it possible for a lifeboat to be launched in safety.

An ideal oil shell would be one that could carry a gallon of oil.

DRUG AND PEPPER "GUN" TO FOIL BANK BANDITS

Bandits who attempt to hold up bank cashiers are to be foiled with drug fumes and cayenne pepper.

Windows of paying tellers soon will have a ventilator so constructed that by pressing a foot bar the cashier sends a stream of red pepper into the bandit's eyes and drugs into his nostrils and up slides a bullet-proof shield to protect the teller or cashier.

The shield is moved by weights attached to a chain which runs up inside the paneling to the shield. With the movement of the weights a cog wheel spins around three fans which throw out the stuff that renders the bandit unconscious.

A STRANGE PERFORMANCE

Mrs. Margaret Ryan, of Chicago, Ill., who has been studying sociology, remembered the teachings contained in her book the other night when she encountered a youth who was bent on holding her up. Mrs. Ryan lectured the youth severely.

"I'm shocked at you," she declared, when the youth held a pistol in her direction. "A boy of your obvious breeding. What would your mother say if she knew you were out threatening people with a pistol? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, committing robbery and murder like that. It's such things that get a nice young fellow like you into jail."

"Can the shatter and kick in," admonished the youth. Mrs. Ryan forgot herself at this point and boxed the youth's ears. She regretted her action when the youth began to weep. As Mrs. Ryan was apologizing for her hasty action and the weeping youth was talking of his plans to reform, he grabbed her purse containing $90 and ran.

SIBERIAN GRAY SQUIRRELS HAVE BECOME PESTS IN ALASKA

Siberian gray squirrels introduced into Northern Alaska have spread into adjacent districts and are proving such a pest that settlers, miners and trappers are asking aid from the Department of Agriculture in exterminating them. They have driven out the native squirrels. The Siberian squirrel eats birds' eggs and steals the bait from traps laid for fur-bearing animals. Hunters report that the marten is the only animal that preys upon the Asiatic imported pest and the Northern Alaskans will destroy five gray squirrels each day. The Siberian squirrel's fur is of little value.

ISLAND WHERE STONES BUY BREAD

In the Island of Uep, one of the Caroline group, the queerest money in the world is used. It is in the form of thick stone circles, in diameter from 1 to 12 feet, and having a hole in the middle through which a pole is passed, to carry the "money" when it exchanges hands. The value of this stone coinage grows with its size, and it has to be of fine white limestone, otherwise it is a bad "coin" and will not be accepted. In Uep folks leave their currency outside their huts. All these strange moneys pass through traders' hands and ultimately in the far-away centres of civilization are represented by real money.

WHERE DO ELEPHANTS DIE?

African hunters are setting out to try and discover the unknown retreats where elephants spend their last hours on earth.

The location of these graveyards has always been one of the most fascinating of the world's mysteries. The bodies of elephants which have died from natural causes are never found either in Africa, Burmah or India, and it seems certain that they must have some secret place to which they travel toward the end of their lives.

Skillful hunters have for ages tried to find a solution of the mystery, but they have always returned from their expeditions without having solved the problem; even the natives, from whom few secrets of the wild animals are hidden, are no wiser.

MYSTIC STORIES

There are still to be found in Malta a number of small stones shaped and colored like the eyes, tongues and other parts of serpents. The superstitious among the Maltese connect these with the tradition that St. Paul when shipwrecked was cast on their island, and that it was there that while lighting a bundle of sticks for a fire a viper fastened on the Apostle's hand. St. Paul calmly shook the reptile off into the flames and no harm followed. The natives wear these stones as talismans, in which character they suppose them serviceable in warding off dangers from snake bites and poisons. They are found in St. Paul's Cave, imbedded in clay, and are set in rings and bracelets, and when found to be in the shape of a tongue or liver or heart are hung around the neck. They are also taken internally, dissolved in wine, which method is attended, according to some people, by more immediate results.

CHALK-DRAWN SHIP CARRIES OFF WITCH

One of the strange legends of the City of Mexico is that of the Mulata de Cordoba.

It is told and believed among the lower classes that a beautiful mulatto who lived at Cordoba came to have the reputation of a witch and by the sale of love charms and forecasts she amassed so much money that the Holy Inquisition seized her and charged her with witchcraft, with an idea of thus seizing her fortune.

She was locked in a cell and sentenced to be burned, but on the morning of her doom a priest reported that he went to her prison to give her a last chance to confess and that he found her putting the finishing touches to a chalk ship drawn on the walls.

He afterward swore that the woman laughed at him and jumped on the chalk lines, as if it were a real ship, and then, before his eyes, the ship sailed along the wall and through the end of the cell and disappeared with the beautiful woman laughing mockingly back at him.

The facts in the matter are that a beautiful young woman was held and about to be burned and was freed before the execution, but investigators declare her escape was not via chalk-drawn ships but via the aid of a priest who proved more susceptible than his office warranted.

INDIANS MADE SAWS CENTURIES AGO

The Indians of Central California made saws before Columbus ever visited America. James A. Barr has made a hobby of collecting prehistoric implements, and he has made a collection of 158 Indian saws. Three of these, probably used to skin game or fish, were fragile implements of soapstone; all of the rest were of hard, black obsidian.

The Indians not only had no metal of which to make their saws, but they had no metal tools with which to make them. Each saw had to be slowly chipped or ground or polished with other bits of stone until it was shaped for use.

Some were serrated on the outer edge, some on the inner and some on both; most of them were also notched near one end, as for a handle. Considering the difficult conditions under which they were made they show remarkable craftsmanship and skill in manufacturing.

In a single tomb were found thirty-one of these saws distributed in a semicircle around the feet of an Indian, who may in life have been either a wealthy chief or a professional saw maker.

In the same tomb were found many pieces of obsidian ready for shaping.

RABBIT FOOT PROVES UNLUCKY

Plenty of grown folks, as well as boys and girls, believe that the possession of a rabbit's foot will bring them luck. Joseph Barrows, of Loraine County, Ohio, had this feeling until the other day. He killed a rabbit and pocketed one of the feet, and within two days his dog died, he lost his knife, he fell into the river, and then ended up with a tumble in the barn and broke a leg and three ribs. Perhaps, however, he didn't get the right sort of rabbit, or he didn't kill the animal in the right stage of the moon. He'll have time to think it over while getting well.

A PEST OF RED ANTS

If you have taken an apartment for a month and paid a big rental for it in advance it is a little irksome to be evicted the day after you move in and without hope of redress. However, that is what is happening to Americans and other visitors in that part of France around Toulon.

The evictions are not carried out by bailiffs, but by formidable red ants. They have invaded the district in millions and are eating up gardens and even getting into beds, where they resent human company. The only way to keep them out of the house is to cover the carpets with gasoline, and even this method is not always effective.

The invasion is worst in the village of Tamaris, whence the inhabitants are fleeing and demand that the Government do something to rid the district of the pests.

MODERN METHUSELAH, 146, ARRIVES IN PARIS

A modern Methuselah, reputed to be the oldest man on earth, has started out to see the world before he gets "too old to travel." Zora Mehmed, 146 years old, of Constantinople, has arrived in Paris. Zora, who has been working pretty consistently for 140 years, is in excellent health and boasts of being able to carry a 200-pound weight.

Zora produces identification papers to prove he was born in 1775 and he refers to his closest competitor for longevity honors, a Sioux Indian in the United States, aged 137 years, as "a mere boy." Zora has a son 95 years old and he has so many descendants that he long ago lost count.

The aged Turk is a skeptic on the subject of matrimony. Having tried the experience four times he says he speaks with a certain amount of authority.

"Women," said Zora, shaking his head bitterly, "women, they may seem as sweet as the rosy dawn, but verily they are more often like thorns, hidden only by a rosy exterior.

RADIO AMATEURS URGED TO ENTERPRISE

"Why does not the amateur who has a little machine shop get off the 'beaten track' and do some experimenting in the transmission of pictures?" writes H. Gernsback in Radio News (New York). "Once in a great while we print an article from some enterprising amateur who has had the spunk to build such an apparatus. Just the same, we predict that when five, or ten years at the most, are up, every amateur will have his radio picture machine.

"Recently the signatures of Briand and Gen. Pershing were sent across the Atlantic by radio on the Belin apparatus. There is no good reason why the amateur cannot do the same thing for smaller distances at any time.

"In the very near future the amateur in New York will buy the first copy of a New York evening paper, wrap it around his cylinder, and send out a whole sheet by radio. A thousand miles away another amateur will have a receiving machine that will reproduce the printed page, type, pictures and all, in less than a half hour. This is a thing impossible to do by ordinary wireless telegraphy, if every word has to be transmitted. The radio picture transmission solves all this. Thus, in time, a great piece of news 'breaking' in the city will be sent broadcast by the enterprsing amateur, who will send the entire front page of the newspaper, for instance, and the radio facsimile can then be exhibited in a distant town from eighteen to twenty-four hours in advance of the receipt of the actual newspaper.

"All this is not a mere dream, but it already has been accomplished to-day. It is up to the amateur to make the thing popular."

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by Chas. F. Oursler.
13. "Under a Mask," by Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Chas. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by Redfield Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Haisey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Rennud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
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96 "At Moriarity's," by Fred S. Shuey.
97 "The Last Star of the Films," by Jack Bechdolt.
98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "A Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
102 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.

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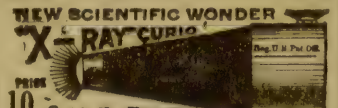
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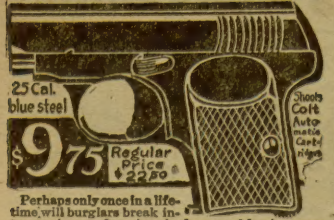

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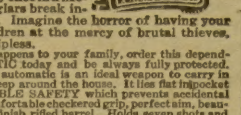

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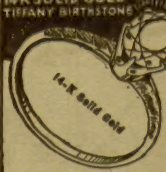

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